British and American Policy with Regard to Greece 1943-1947
The Transition from British to American Patronage

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Abstract

British Foreign Office efforts during World War II to ensure the peaceful restoration of the King and his Government-in-Exile after Greece was liberated were frustrated by the King's refusal, with Churchill's support, to submit himself to a plebiscite. The United States refused to become involved (except for an unwarranted interference by Roosevelt) and generally disapproved of British policies. The return of the Government-in-Exile to Greece without a firm commitment by the King concerning his future resulted in a Communist-led revolt which was ended only by British military intervention and by Churchill finally forcing the King to accept a regency and the plebisicite.

In post-war Greece, Britain continued to use her influence and support in an effort to establish stability in the face of serious economic difficulties and a right-wing reaction to the Communists, which led to a new civil war. Britain's own financial difficulties made it impossible to solve the economic problems or to bring order to political chaos. In autumn 1946, the United States perceived in the Greek situation a strategic threat to its interests, but its capacity to assist Greece was severely limited by a hostile Congress and neo-isolationism.

In early 1947, Britain's financial situation and its doubts as to the strategic value of Greece resulted in a sudden decision to abandon all aid. The American administration was forced to resort to an idealogical crusade in order to obtain the funds necessary to prevent the fall of the Greek Government and a probable Communist-led victory in the new civil war. The proclamation of the American policy was the initial action of the Cold War, and a direct result of the policies which the British and Americans had been pursuing towards Greece since 1943.

Preface

In April 1941, the British forces in Greece withdrew in the face of the German invasion, taking with them the remnants of the Greek Government in the face of German invasion. That government remained under British aupices during the war and was reinstated in Athens in September 1944. The British rescued it from destruction by a Communist-led rebellion in December of that year, and tried against heavy odds to instill stability and well-being into a country which had known neither for many years. In the face of Britain's limited financial position, the political and economic weakness of Greece, and what was perceived to be a Soviet threat, the United States in 1947 took over the task of rebuilding and maintaining Greece.

This transition in a matter of six years was remarkable. Until at least 1945, the American Government wanted as little as possible to do with Greece; at best it saw the country as a British sphere of influence which should be respected as a matter of diplomacy; at worst it wanted to disassociate itself from what was felt to be British neo-colonialism in an area in which it then had little interest.

A number of aspects of this transition have already been examined in detail, but from either the British or the American position, and usually for limited periods. John S.

Koliopoulos has provided the definitive study of British policy towards Greece up until the evacuation of 1941.[1] British policy is analysed by Procopis Papistratis for the period of the German occupation;[2] by George M. Alexander, from April 1944 until early 1947;[3] and by Heinz Richter, from the Varkiza agreement of February 1945 until the plebiscite of September 1946.[4]

The American involvement has been given far less attention. John O. Iatrides has included a study of American war-time policies in analysing the December 1944 revolt.[5] Lawrence S. Wittner, in a work concerning American policies towards Greece for a longer period, provides only two chapters on the events prior to the Truman Doctrine.[6] The monograph by Anne Karalekas on American policy in 1942-1945[7] is brief and incomplete. Terry M. Anderson, in his work on the origins of the new Anglo-American relationship which began in early 1947, has shown the importance of

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[1] *Greece and the British Connection, 1936-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977).

[2] *British Policy towards Greece during the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[3] *The Prelude to the Truman Doctrine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982).

[4] *British Intervention in Greece* (London: Merlin, 1986).

[5] *Revolt in Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

[6] *American Intervention in Greece* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

[7] *Britain, the United States, and Greece, 1942-1945* (New York: Garland, 1988).

Greece in this development, and in so doing has shed considerable light on the policies of both.[e] With the exception of Anderson, these authors have focused their attention on the impact of either British or American policies on Greece.

There are two main purposes of this study. The first is the examination of the process by which these two policies were developed and, especially, how they were related. Equally important is the analysis of how and why this development became the key factor in the initiation of the Cold War. A further objective is an evalation of the Anglo-American relationship during the period with regard to Greece.

The formulation and evolution of policy towards Greece on the part of the two outside powers has been investigated in some depth, with emphasis on policy conflicts. While British and American attitudes for most of the period were divergent, disagreements within the ranks of each government were equally significant. On the British side at various times, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Office, the Treasury, and the military had differing policies on Greece; within American circles during the war years there was often a considerable variance between the views of the President and the State Department. An understanding of these internal conflicts is essential to an explanation of both how policy was developed and the difficulties in its implementation.

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[e] *The United States, Great Britain, and the Cold War* Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1981).

These conflicts involved incidents which require detailed analysis of causes and effects. Included are the effect of the visit of Greek resistance leaders to Cairo in August 1943; the interference by President Roosevelt in December 1943 which ruined a critical British initiative; the failure of the Americans to assist in the liberation of Greece; and the efforts by which King George II, often supported by Churchill, was able time and time again to frustrate British attempts to establish stable government. In addition, considerable attention has been given to clarification of the actual process by which the British made the decision to withdraw aid from Greece, a matter misunderstood by a number of authorities.

The detailed investigation of these problems, while significant in themselves, are essential to an understanding of the critical action by which Britain gave over its long-standing position in Greece to the Americans. They lead to discussion of the questions of why Bevin made this decision and whether this action was the cause of the Truman Doctrine, or the pretext for its adoption; in essence, what caused the Americans to accept responsiblity for Greece.

If there is one issue examined which overshadows the others, it is that of whether the British decision was a based on a deliberate attempt to force the United States back into full participation in international affairs, after a period of post-war neo-isolationism. Other causes suggested for the British action include financial necessity, left-wing political presure, and strategic factors, but one

school of thought holds that the major, if not the only, motivation for the British withdrawal from Greece was Ernest Bevin's fervent desire to bring the United States to the defence of Europe in the face of a Soviet threat. If this is accepted, the British must either take the credit for bringing about the American actions which saved the Western world from Communism, or must bear the blame for initiating the Cold War.

The study is based on the diplomatic records of the British and American governments, along with private papers of such participants as Anthony Eden, Ernest Bevin, Hugh Dalton, and Lord Francis-Williams. These records have been supplemented by autobiographies, memoirs and diaries of participants.

Some explanation is required concerning the use and citation of American diplomatic records. Where possible, these are cited by reference to the printed material in the appropriate volume of *Foreign Relations of the United States*, rather than to the actual document in the National Archives. While a search was made for the originals of the printed records, it was the case in July 1984 that many of the original documents regarding Greece had never been returned to their normal files after the printed volumes were prepared. When the actual document was available, it was compared with the printed version. Only original documents which have not been printed, or which are imcom-plete in the printed volume, have been cited as being from the National Archives, and indicated by the abbreviation NARS.

A review of the references will show that there are more British than American sources cited. The major factor responsible is the fact that State Department files on Greece in the National Archives contain relatively little in the way of internal papers, that is, comments by desk officers on incoming telegrams, internal memoranda, correspondence between staff sections, and drafts of proposed messages and action papers. In contrast to Foreign Office files, which usually provide a full history of how even minor decisions came about, the State Department decimal files are usually limited to incoming telegrams and final copies of outgoing telegrams and action papers.

There is also a relative lack of American diairies and useful memoirs, particularly for the wartime period. The memoirs of Cordell Hull, Joseph Grew, Admiral Leahy, and James Byrnes, and the diary of Edward Stettinius contain little of value on Greece. Only the published papers of Harry Hopkins provide a useful amount of source material on Greece for the wartime period. In the postwar period, the memoirs of Truman, Dean Acheson, James Forrestal, and Charles Bohlen, along with the informed account, *The Fifteen Weeks*, by Joseph M. Jones, are of value, but give far less attention to Greece than one would wish. The diaries of Lincoln MacVeagh, American Ambassador to Greece, are the one exception, in that they provide an almost day to day account of Greek affairs from November 1943 until early 1945.

In contrast, there is an extensive range of British accounts by participants, beginning with Churchill's *History*

of the Second World War. The memoirs of Eden, Macmillan, Dalton, Leeper, and the two commanders of the British Liaison Mission to Greece, E. C. W. Myers and C. M. Woodhouse; and the diaries and papers of Dalton, ~~MacMillan,~~ Macmillan Alexander Cadogan, Pierson Dixon, and John Colville represent the most useful of this category with regard to Greece.

Chapter I

British and American Policies
April 1941--August 1943

1. The Problem of the King and the Government-in-Exile

From the time the British Government evacuated King George II and his Cabinet from Greece in 1941, it was faced with the problem of making his Government-in-Exile a rallying point for Greeks at home and abroad in the furtherance of the war effort, as well as an instrument of maintaining their policy objectives in the post-war world. In the first years, it was the only institution representative of occupied Greece.

The Greek Government, eventually based in Cairo,[1] consisted of the Greek King and a small cabinet hastily thrown together during the last days in Athens, after the suicide of Alexander Koryzis, the emergency successor of John Metaxas, dictator of Greece since 1936. The new Prime Minister was Emanuel Tsouderos, who had previously held only minor political office, although he had once been exiled for opposition to the Metaxas regime. He was a compromise leader who combined long-term republican

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[1]It was taken first to Crete, but had to be hastily moved to Egypt in the face of the German invasion. Part of the Government then went to England, and some to South Africa, with elements remaining in Egypt. It was finally established in Cairo in March 1943.

sympathies with a strong pro-British attitude and a view that the best future for Greece lay in loyalty to the monarchy as a rallying point for the distressed country.[2]

The critical problem for the British was the position of the King. For other governments-in-exile, such as the Norwegian and the Dutch, the monarch was a constitutional ruler on the British model, and a figure of importance almost exclusively as a symbol of resistance and national unity. The opposite was true of Greece, where twentieth-century politics were polarised between monarchism and republicanism. The main argument was between the conservative elements in Greek society who were royalists and the liberals who wished for a republic. King George II had been exiled in 1923 when the republican followers of Eleftherios Venezelos came to power, and restored to the throne in 1935 when right-wing elements prevailed. It would have been very difficult for any monarch of Greece to disassociate himself from the monarchist faction and act as an arbitrator between royalist and liberal. The conservatives looked upon him as their protector and liberals saw him as their enemy. This point seems never to have been understood by either Winston Churchill or Franklin Roosevelt, and was to cause serious trouble for Greece during the entire war and early post-war periods.

George II had little prestige in the eyes of many Greeks. He had been recalled to the throne in 1935 on the basis of a plebiscite which many observers felt to have been

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[2]Koliopoulos, *Greece and the British Connection*, pp. 148ff, 287-288.

rigged. While the elections of 1936 had shown an almost even split between royalists and republicans, a considerable amount of the support for right-wing parties seems to have represented self-interest in attempting to regain patronage and position lost to the republicans. The lack of a clear-cut mandate for either side led to the Metaxas dictatorship and the virtual cessation of parliamentary democracy. The King's reputation at home and abroad suffered badly from his acceptance of the dictatorship, with its apparent pro-fascist and pro-German attitudes. There is no reliable way of judging popular opinion, but it is suggested that a free election in 1939 or 1940 would have resulted in a republican victory.

While some Greeks renewed their support of the King because of his determined and effective resistance to the Italian invasion, others saw him as pro-German, or at least responsible for the German occupation. These were ill-founded views, but easy to accept in time of trouble. To the left-wing in Greek politics, he was the symbol of evil, reaction, and capitalism. Even the military officer class was divided into republican and pro-royalist factions. The republican group of the army leadership attempted to over-throw the monarchy in 1922 and forced George II into exile in 1923. Most of these anti-royalist officers had been removed from active service in 1935, and were anxious to regain their lost positions within the Greek forces being formed outside Greece, or to establish themselves as leaders of the resistance movements in the occupied area. Even royalists were expressing the opinion as the King left

Greece in 1941 that he would never return.[3] There was a general fear that his restoration would mean a return of a dictatorship, even though the offending portions of the Constitution had been removed, and, after a few months, the last of the Metaxas ministers were removed from the Cabinet.

The feeling that the King should not return was particularly strong in occupied Greece. Intelligence reports filtering out to Cairo from the autumn of 1941 onward emphasised the strong view that the King must go, or at least that the King should not return unless he submitted himself first to a plebiscite on the question. To the King and his followers this was nonsense; it was the talk of ill-informed persons or political enemies. To the British Government it was an embarrassment. The British were committed to the support of the King, at least for the duration of the war. It had gone to the aid of the royalist government in the face of the German invasion, it had evacuated the King and his cabinet from Greece, and it had fully recognised the Government-in-Exile as the legitimate government of Greece.

The difficulties inherent in Greek affairs which George II inherited were not helped by his background and personality. He appears to have been a most conscientious monarch, but one in whom traces of divine-right theory

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[3]A useful analysis of the King's position at this point is provided by Lincoln MacVeagh, the American Minister and later Ambassador to Greece, 1933-1941 and 1943-1948, in John O. Iatrides, *Ambassador MacVeagh Reports* (Princeton University Press, 1980) (hereinafter Iatrides, *MacVeagh*), pp. 376-378.

remained. He was convinced that it was his duty to serve the people of Greece as King, and equally positive that the people of Greece should recognise it. He might have been happy to serve as a constitutional monarch on the British or Scandanavian model, so long as the dignity of the crown was preserved, but this system could not be forced on the Greek political personality. Add to this a strong streak of stubbornness and of *amour-propre*, and the result was a very difficult proposition.[4] In defence of George II, it must be said that he never wavered from full support for the Allied cause, even in the darkest days of the war. He was the head of state, recognised as such by all the Allies. As such, he could hardly have been repudiated by Britain.

An additional difficulty was the fact that the King and the Government-in-Exile had only a questionable title to the leadership of the Greek nation. The Government-in-Exile had no legitimacy based on elections. The few members of the new cabinet who remained from the previous administration were tarred with the brush of Metaxasism; the others were theoretically non-political, such as the service chiefs (in actuality usually royalist) or persons not previously involved in politics. There was almost no representation of the old political parties. The fundamental law under which

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[4]The only detailed study of George II is that contained in *The Royal House of Greece*, by A. S. G. Lee (London: Ward Lock, 1948), which is uncritical at best. An incisive appreciation is that of Lincoln MacVeagh, U.S. Minister in Athens, in a report to the State Department of 19 July 1941, United States National Archives and Record Service, State Department Decimal Files (hereinafter NARS) 868.00/1124. This is summarised in Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, a work which contains many more insights into George II's character and personality.

the government operated was the Constitution of 1911, as modified by amendments in 1936 designed to give a legal basis for the restrictive measures of Metaxas. From the beginning of the exile, the government was under attack by Greeks living abroad as being unrepresentative of the wishes of the Greek people and a continuation of the dictatorship. Intelligence reports indicated that there was a similar climate of opinion growing within occupied Greece.

In the autumn of 1941, the British Foreign Office began studies of what became known as the `Constitutional Question´, i.e., the matter of getting rid of the Metaxas amendments to the Constitution and the problem of the establishment of the legitimacy of the Government-in-Exile. What seemed to be a simple matter of suggesting to Tsouderos that the King and Government announce that the Metaxas changes were now null and void turned into a long-running discussion of related problems, especially that of the future of the King. After some pressure from the British, the King made a formal declaration in February 1942 which removed the offending laws.[5]

As the amount of opposition to the King became more evident, the British Foreign Office began to see the advantage of a declaration that he would not return to Greece without a plebiscite, or, at least, would submit himself to such a procedure after he returned. There were

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[5]A detailed summary of the Foreign Office examination of the constitutional question is contained in the Confidential Print of 26 February 1942, in Public Record Office Class FO371, *Foreign Office Political Correspondence* (hereinafter FO371), 33167/R1362.

two difficulties in obtaining a declaration of this sort. In the first place, the King did not want to bind himself to such an arrangement which might mean he would 'return to his travels' of 1924-1935. Secondly, as the records will demonstrate, Winston Churchill was adamant in the view that monarchy was the best form of government for Greece.

The tragedy of the question of the King's future was that it was not settled until after the liberation of Greece, and a short, but costly, civil war. The issue gave the left wing in Greece a major cause with which to attract support, and to build a strong political and military movement dedicated to the overthrow of the King and the Government-in-Exile. If this had been successful, Greece would have been ruled by a pro-communist regime, possibly within the Soviet bloc. The British inability to settle this question early in the period created a dangerous situation which eventually had to be resolved by the use of major force and the loss of British as well as Greek lives. The United States contributed heavily to the British difficulties by their failure to give whole-hearted support to British policies, by their `hands-off' policy, and by their refusal to assist in the liberation of Greece.

2. The American Attitude to Greece

The United States had had no involvement of significance with the Greek Government-in-Exile up to this point. Greece and the Balkans in general were considered by the Americans to be outside their field of interest, a policy

based partially on an assumption that the United States had no long-range interests of importance in the area, and partially because the Americans accepted that the Balkans were a British sphere of interest. One of the unexplained facets of U.S. foreign policy in this period is the contradiction of the distaste for spheres of influence and the willingness to concede all influence in Greece to the British.

The American attitude to Greek affairs was that of friendship with a country which had put up a fight against the Germans, and of military interest to the extent that Greece might be a centre of resistance to the Germans, or a source of intelligence. The Americans recognised the Greek Government-in-Exile as the legitimate government, but held no brief for the monarchy--not because of any specific objection to George II, but in terms of the general American belief in republicanism as a more effective form of government.

The United States maintained diplomatic relations with the Greek Government-in-Exile in London through Anthony Drexel Biddle, who was accredited to it as Minister and later Ambassador. Most discussions between the two governments took place between the Greek Legation (later Embassy) in Washington and the State Department. The detachment of the Americans is evident from the paucity of diplomatic correspondence or staff memoranda in the 1942

archives.[6] Americans in 1942 were content to allow the British to be responsible for the future of Greece, looking on only as detached observers.

The Americans relied almost completely on British sources for knowledge of what was taking place in Greece and in the relationships between the British and the Greeks in exile. One of the few documents on Greece in State Department files for 1942 is a report by Foy Kohler[7], who had been Third Secretary of the American Legation in Athens before it closed in 1941. This summarised information he had received on a visit to Cairo in January 1942, probably from officials of either the British Embassy or of the British Minister of State, Oliver Lyttleton. Kohler noted that local British officials were emphasising the dissatisfaction of the Greek people with the King and those ministers held over from the Metaxas regime, but that London had been disregarding their views.

His own conclusions were that a pro-Allied government would be formed in Greece in the expected interregnum

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[6]There are no copies of diplomatic correspondence or of internal papers concerning the future of Greece or of British (or of American) policies towards Greece in Foreign Relations of the United States (hereinafter FRUS), 1942, Volume II, although other matters such as relief operations are covered. The State Department decimal files for Greece for 1941 and 1942 contain only a few scattered documents; those of any significance are cited *infra*. The other major source for U.S. policy towards Greece, Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, does not help for the early period, since MacVeagh left Greece in mid-1941 and did not return until late 1943.

[7]Foy Kohler (1908-____), Legation Secretary, Athens, 1936-1941; Staff Officer, 1941-1944, and Assistant Chief, 1944-1945, Division of Near East Affairs, State Department; Ambassador to Russia, 1962-1966.

between German retreat and Allied landings, and that this government would proclaim a republic. He expected that the republic would have the full support of the Greek people who would demand that the Allies respect this development in accordance with the Atlantic Charter. His recommendation was that the Allies should avoid implying or making commitments regarding the continuance of the present regime after liberation.[8] The official policy of the State Department with regard to the retention of the King on the throne after the war was to urge a plebiscite or other means by which the Greek people could make their wishes known.[9] This seems also to have been the policy of President Roosevelt in the beginning, but it will be seen that he came to the defence of George II at a critical point in Anglo-Greek relations.

3. British Policy, April 1941-March 1943

The first statement of British policy towards the King which has any substance arose after Tsouderos, on 8 October 1941, made a speech in which he set forth the policies of his government concerning the constitutional position of Greece after liberation. Tsouderos promised 'a regime of freedom' which would 'permit of the equal participation of all in a form of public life which shall secure freedom of

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[8]Report of 28 January, NARS 868.00/1144.

[9]An example of State Department policy in this matter is the memorandum to the British Embassy of 2 July 1943 in FRUS, 1943, IV, 123-4. This and other pertinent statements of U.S. policy are discussed in detail *infra*.

the individual against any illegal action on the part of those who are in authority or their agents, but which at the same time shall secure the whole body social against any illegal and selfish action of individuals and shall impose the subjection of private interest to the interest of the community.' (Underlining in ink on the Foreign Office minute quoting the speech.) Pierson Dixon'[10] in the Foreign Office, expressed doubts as to whether this amounted to a definite statement of an intention to restore full democratic government. Orme Sargent[11], in a following minute, stated: 'We have pledged ourselves to see the King and M. Tsouderos' Government through to the end.'[12]

This view was confirmed by Churchill on 23 October 1941, when he wrote to Eden with regard to minor complaints from the King: `Our policy is to support the Greek King and Government, and not to allow them to be undermined or ill-used.' Eden, in reply, agreed and added, `we are pledged to see them through to the end'. He also pointed out that, if the King and his government were to be welcomed back into

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[10]Pierson Dixon (1904-1965), Southern Department of the Foreign Office, 1940-1943; accompanied Eden to Greece in March-April 1941; Principal Private Secretary to Eden, 1943-1945; accompanied Eden and Churchill to Athens, December 1944, to Yalta, February 1945, and to Potsdam, July 1945; continued as Principal Private Secretary to Bevin until end of 1947; Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, 1948-1950.

[11]Orme Sargent (1884-1962), Deputy Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1939-1946; Permanent Under Secretary, 1946-1949.

[12]Minutes, 24-25 October 1941, FO371/29909/R9277.

Greece, Britain must work for a Greece united in their support.[13]

Probably without any knowledge of these two statements, the Greek Prime Minister in October and November 1941 sent a series of memoranda to the Foreign Office culminating in a message of 7 November in which he asked that Britain commit herself to the restoration of the King and his government in Greece by force if necessary. The internal reaction of the Foreign Office was that Britain could not for one moment contemplate helping to restore the King by force, although the information then available to it suggested that even if the war ended at that moment, the King could not return except with armed support.[14] Neither Tsouderos nor the Foreign Office identified the forces in Greece which they expected would seek to prevent the return of the King; they appear to believe that general public opinion, both republican and royalist, would not accept George II.

In early 1942, an emissary from Greece arrived in Cairo with a message from General Gonatas, who had been a leader of the revolt which removed George II from the throne in 1924. Gonatas claimed to represent a new movement of politicians within Greece which included royalists, republicans, and left-wing leaders. According to him, both the puppet regime in Athens and the Tsouderos Government in London were seen by the Greek people as continuations of the Metaxas regime and therefore unacceptable. He denied the

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[13]Minutes, 29 October, FO371/29909/R9467.

[14]Minute, 21 November, FO371/29910/R9987.

possibility that there was any support at all in Greece for the restoration of the King and voiced the suspicion that the Greek Army now being formed by the British in the Middle East would be used to impose the King by force.[15]

The Foreign Office accepted this as evidence of the King's unpopularity, although it is difficult to understand why Gonatas should be expected to provide an unbiased account of general public opinion. Orme Sargent felt that the chances of George II regaining his throne were very slight. He was afraid that the British Government might have gone too far in hoping that the King could be restored, or that the Greek people might eventually rally to him. He emphasised that Britain should avoid any suggestion that they wished to force George II and Tsouderos on the Greek people.

With Eden's approval, a message was sent back to Gonatas to the effect that His Majesty's Government officially recognised the Tsouderos Government as the legal government of Greece, and would give it full support. It was the British hope that the Greek people would rally round the King and his government for the period of the war, although nothing was said about his restoration upon liberation. It asked that the Greek people "avoid positions in respect of political questions which can only be settled after the liberation".[16]

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[15]Minister of State telegram 90, 7 January, FO371/33160/R174.

[16]Sargent's minute and Eden's approval, 30-31 January, FO371/33167/R792; reply to Gonatas, Foreign Office telegram 582, 2 February, *ibid.*, R1362.

The substance of this message was disseminated to the Political Intelligence Department (for guidance of the BBC and other propaganda outlets) and to the various agencies involved in intelligence and subversive operations in Greece. It must therefore be considered to be the standing British policy in early 1942 with regard to the King and his government. It was a policy which pleased no one. It failed to offer strong support for the King or for Tsouderos, yet it made it clear that the British would maintain them in office during the occupation. For the time being this policy was not dangerous; no doubt it was the best approach to take an equivocal stand pending further developments. So long as there was no organised opposition to the King and his government, there should be little to fear.

This ambiguous policy had to be reexamined in August 1942 when Sir Michael Palairet presented his credentials as Ambassador to the King.[17] In his speech, he stated:

> His Majesty's Government observe with satisfaction the various declarations by your Majesty and M. Tsouderos, in which it is plain that it is the policy of your Majesty's Government to leave it to them [the Greek people] freely to determine their future political conditions, when, after the war, your Majesty has resumed in your capital, your place on the throne of Greece.'

In a letter to the head of the Special Operations Executive,[18] it was stated that the speech was approved by

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[17]Palairet had been Minister to Greece since 1939; it was necessary to present new credentials when the Legation was made an Embassy.

[18]The Special Operations Executive, usually referred to as SOE, was the branch of the Ministry of Economic Warfare responsible for subversive activities against the Axis in occupied territories.

the Foreign Office as a firm affirmation of British Government policy, which should be publicised fully.[19] The King and the Greek Government welcomed this speech, which they took to mean that the British Government intended to restore the King.

There was a considerable reaction in Cairo. Panaghiotis Kannellopoulos, who had been brought from Greece to join the Tsoudros Government as a representative of more liberal elements, protested at what seemed to be a definite promise to restore the King.[20] Sargent pointed out to Churchill that republican Greeks assumed that this meant that the King would be restored regardless of the wishes of the Greek people.[21] The Foreign Office seems to have regretted its approval of Palairet's speech, although it felt it useful to have reminded the Greeks that the British Government supported the King.[22]

Perhaps as a result, the Foreign Office in October 1942 developed a new statement of policy towards Greece. This differed little from that of January, except that it included:

> His Majesty's Government approve the various declarations by the King of Greece and the Greek Prime Minister in which it has been made plain that the Greek Government are not exercising dictatorial authority, and that it is the intention of the King and Government, who are acting as the trustees of

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[19]Speech and letter, 18-19 August, FO371/33202/R5438.

[20]Minister of State telegram 1429, 29 August; letters, 23 and 26 August, FO371/33162/R5729 and R5766.

[21]Memorandum, 6 March 1943, PREM 3 211/15.

[22]Draft message in FO371/33162/R5706, and generally in this piece.

> the Greek people, to leave it to the Greek people freely to determine their future political conditions which we would hope would be on the basis of a democratic constitutional monarchy.

There was also included a declaration that the British Government did not intend to restore the King by force, but expressed the view that the British felt that a monarchial regime was more likely to provide Greece with a stable government in the post-war world than `a republican regime which in the past failed to produce anything but weak and unreliable governments in Greece.'[23]

4. The American View of Initial British Policy

A copy of this declaration was taken to Washington in autumn 1942 by Henry Hopkinson, the specialist on Greek affairs in the office of the British Minister of State in Cairo.[24] This visit seems to have provided the State Department with its first briefing on British policy towards Greece, and resulted in a detailed study by the Division of Near Eastern Affairs. In a memorandum of 28 December 1942, the British statement was found to be in general accordance with American official attitudes with respect to continual support of the King and the Government-in-Exile as the legal government, and the declaration that the Greek people would

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[23]Statement, 12 October, FO371/37222/R2301.

[24]The reasons for Hopkinson's visit to Washington is not evident. The only mentions of it which have been located are in a file entitled 'Brief for Mr Eade's Visit to Washington' dated March 1943 in FO371/37222/R2301, and a reference to it in the State Department memorandum of 28 December 1942 discussed *infra*.

be allowed freely to determine their political future after the war.

The Americans took a strong line with regard to the British predilection for a monarchial rather than a republican form of government for liberated Greece. They felt that the statement committed the British to a restoration of the Greek King by any means short of force, an attitude which would in practice deny the Greek people a free choice of their political system. It was specifically suggested that this violated the Atlantic Charter.

The memorandum went on to claim that the British conclusions were based on a number of false premises. First of all, there were doubts that the British understood how little support the King had in Greece. The State Department view was that the King had gained little lasting prestige for his leadership during the Italian campaign and had lost two chances of improving his situation by his failure at the death of Metaxas and at the suicide of Koryzis to establish strong and representative governments. Instead he had retained a number of hated Metaxas ministers, supplemented by some of his own followers. While the Metaxist followers had since been purged, one liberal (Kannellopoulos) installed, and some statements made about renouncing dictatorship, there seemed little change in the King's real attitude.

In particular, the Americans doubted that the Greek people would trust promises made by George II to act as a democratic constitutional monarch. He had given the most categorical assurances that he intended to reign in that way

when he returned to Greece in 1935, and almost immediately installed a dictatorship. Further, they took exception to the British view that a monarchial regime was more likely to furnish post-war Greece with a stable government than would a republican one. The Americans pointed to weakness under previous monarchial regimes and to major achievements of the Venezelos governments of 1924-1935.

They also felt that an attempt to `sell´ the King to the Greek people was not only unlikely to meet with success, but would destroy any hopes of establishing the Greek unity which the British so definitely desired. The commentary showed a clear understanding of the point that the Crown had, in the past twenty-five years, represented not unity but bitter partisanhip in Greek politics. It went so far as to say that Greece had achieved unity only twice during that period--in opposition to the Italians in 1940, and in opposition to the King in the wake of events of the spring of 1941.

The memorandum concluded with the recommendation that the U. S. attitude should be based on the principle that the Greek people should have an opportunity after the war to express their own political will freely. This would not only be in accordance with general American policies, but would be in line with U. S. self-interest `for the ingrained pro-American and pro-British sentiments of an entire people, which would thus be confirmed, are surely a sounder guarantee of a Greece friendly and loyal to the democracies in the future than are the pledges of a dynasty´.

The high-minded sentiments of this memorandum were then tempered with a recognition of the practical difficulties. The Americans believed that some sort of anti-German local government would be organised in Greece during the occupation, a government which would have full popular support, but would be overwhelmingly republican. If the King and his government were returned to Greece under the protection of Allied military forces, civil war, possibly beyond the control of the occupation army, was likely to result, a remarkedly prescient view in the light of the limited American knowledge of developments in Greece.

The Allies could recognise this local government, but such an action would repudiate the Government-in-Exile which the U. S. and Britain were supporting as the legitimate power. The State Department suggested that an Allied occupation continue until conditions permitted an expression of the people's will. During this occupation, the local government might be used more effectively by the Allies 'if they were not bound by any system of national politics'. The last point does not explain what would happen to the Government-in-Exile.

The memorandum was circulated to other officers of the State Department and generally approved, although considerable stress was placed on the necessity of supporting existing Governments-in-Exile until liberation. There was agreement that the matter had to be discussed with the British, and the suggestion that the British might assume that the United States approved their policy *in toto*, unless the latter made its views clear. In early January 1943

instructions were given for the preparation of an Aide-Memoire to be sent to the Foreign Office, but there is no indication that this was done.[25]

In March, the Department prepared another memorandum, restating the points of the December study, for the use of Cordell Hull during the visit of Eden to Washington. There is no evidence that Greece was discussed at that level, but on 29 March Wallace Murray[26] of the State Department took up the subject with William Strang[27] of the Foreign Office, who had accompanied Eden. Murray asked two questions. First, did the British intend that the Greek people be allowed to express themselves regarding the restoration of the monarchy? Second, should the King and the Government-in-Exile return to liberated Greece before the people had expressed their political will? Strang referred the questions to the Foreign Office for reply, a fortunate move, since by that time, probably unbeknown to Strang or Eden, a new and stronger policy statement had been formulated in London.[28]

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[25]Memorandum of 28 December and comments thereto, NARS 868.01/333-1/4.

[26]Wallace Murray (1887-1965), Assistant Chief, 1925-1929 and Chief, 1929-1942, Division of Near East Affairs, State Department; Advisor on Political Relations, State Department, 1944-1945.

[27]William Strang (1893-1978), Assistant Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 1939-1943.

[28]Memorandum, 16 March, and note 9, FRUS, 1943, IV, 126-127; Strang's memorandum, 7 April, FO371/37195/R3210.

5. The Modified Policy of March 1943

March 1943 was a period of change and turmoil in Greek affairs. The King and Tsouderos moved the seat of the Government-in-Exile to Cairo. At the same time, Reginald Leeper[29] was appointed Ambassador in succession to Palairet, and took up his post in Cairo. The stability of the Tsouderos government was threatened by a serious revolt in the Greek armed forces being trained by the British in Syria. The revolt had its roots in the distrust by royalist officers of republicans who had been given posts of importance within the forces, and allegations that the army was being formed, not so much to fight the Axis, but to restore George II to Greece by force if necessary.[30] The rebellion led to the formation of a somewhat more broadly-based cabinet, still under Tsouderos, and an increased appreciation among British officials of the extent of opposition to the King among Greeks.

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[29]Reginald (Rex) Leeper (1888-1868), an Australian who served during the First World War in the British Department of Information, specialising in matters pertaining to Russia; entered Foreign Service 1918, serving mainly in Eastern Europe; Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, 1938-1940; Assistant Secretary of State responsible for covert propaganda in what became the Political Warfare Executive; Ambassador to the Greek Government, 1943-1946; Ambassador to Argentina, 1946-1948.

[30]The 1943 army revolt is discussed in detail by Papistratis, *British Policy*, pp. 74-85; and Hagen Fleischer, "The "Anomalies" in the Greek Middle East Forces, 1941-1944," *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, V-3 (Fall 1978), pp. 5-36.

This opposition was highlighted by the reports which began to emanate from Greece from the Harling Mission of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) which had been dropped into Greece in September 1942. This first group was the nucleus of the large-scale infiltration of SOE agents, known as British Liaison Officers, and collectively as the British Liaison Mission.[31] The specific purpose of the mission was the support and encouragement of Greek resistance groups opposing the Axis occupation, but it was immediately caught up in the political struggles amongst the various factions of the resistance movement, much to the dismay of the Foreign Office.

They were completely taken aback in March 1943 when SOE transmitted a consolidation of the first reports from the Mission.[32] The immediate reaction was a letter of enquiry about Harling which amounted to a thinly veiled complaint that not only had the Foreign Office had not been alerted to the operation,[33] but, more important, that the Liaison

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[31]Harling and the British (later Allied, when American Office of Strategic Services personnel joined) Military Mission are described in detail by the first commander, Brigadier E. C. W. Myers, in *The Greek Entanglement* (London: Hart-Davis, 1955); and by his second-in-command and ultimate successor, Colonel C. M. Woodhouse, in *The Apple of Discord* (London: Hutchinson, n.d. (1948).

[32]FO371/37201/R2050.

[33]Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Undersecretary, knew of this operation in advance, but it is possible that he and others in the Foreign Office understood it to be only a military sabotage action, which indeed was its inital task. Cadogan's knowledge of Harling is explained by Richard Clogg, 'Pearls from Swine,' in *British Policy towards War-Time Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece* ed. Phyllis Auty and Richard Clogg (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 176-177, citing the documents in FO371/33177/R2657.

Officers were involving themselves in Greek politics. The Foreign Office saw this as an infringement of their prerogatives, exacerbated by the fact that SOE officers had little background or training in political matters, especially in the complexities of internal Greek politics. This last was no doubt true, but it is also apparent that the Foreign Office itself had very little understanding of the situation.[34] The letter of enquiry led to lengthy and heated discussions between the two bodies, which did nothing to satisfy the Foreign Office.[35] This argument amounted to the opening round of a battle between the two concerning Greece which was to continue until the end of the war.

It was evident from the reports of the British Liaison Officers, and fragmentary information brought out of Greece by refugees, that there were several separate Greek resistance groups. Their distinctive political orientations were not defined at this stage, but it gradually became clear that there were two principal organisations, EAM/ELAS

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[34]Clogg, *ibid.*, pp. 170-171, points out that the Foreign Office were aware in September 1942 of the existence of some of the resistance movements and their relative strengths, citing FO371/33175/R1793, 33187/R5354, and 33163/R6961. The relative lack of knowledge of the Foreign Office is demonstrated, for example, by the two Foreign Office memoranda on Greek resistance movements of 8 and 15 March 1943 in 37222/R2301.

[35]FO371/37201/R2050, R2636, R3348.

and EDES.[36] EAM[37] was founded by leaders of the Greek Communist Party (KKE)[38] as a resistance group open to all Greeks. A large proportion of the rank and file were not communist sympathisers, but joined the organisation for patriotic reasons. The leaders of EAM made strong efforts to create the impression that it amounted to an apolitical nationalist movement, a reputation EAM achieved during the war years in many quarters outside Greece. From the beginning, EAM was the largest group, with the greatest capability for guerrilla warfare. In political terms, it would be difficult to call it republican, since there is no clear picture of the form of government it advocated for post-war Greece; it certainly was opposed to the return of the King and his Government-in-Exile during the occupation years.

EDES[39] represented a different strand in Greek politics, that of Venizelist republicanism. Its titular leader was General Nicholas Plastiras, who had been driven into

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[36]John Louis Hondros, *Occupation and Resistance* (New York: Pella, 1983), chapter 4, provides a clear and balanced summary of the resistance groups. Other useful sources are Nigel Clive, *A Greek Experience* (Wilton: Michael Russell, 1985); Nicholas Hammond, *Venture into Greece* (London: Kimber, 1983); John L. Loulis, *The Greek Communist Party* (London: Croom Helm, 1982); Myers, *Greek Entanglement*; Stephanos Sarafis, *ELAS* (London: Merlin, 1980); and Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord*.

[37]EAM (Ethniko Apeleutherotiko Metopo) (National Liberation Front) was the overall political organisation of this particular movement; ELAS (Ellenikos Laikos Apeleutherotikos Stratos) (Popular Greek Liberation Army) was its guerrilla arm. There was in practice so little distinction between the two that the term EAM will be used for both organisations, except in direct quotations.

[38]Kommounistikou Komma Ellados.

[39]Ethnikos Demokratilos Ellenikos Synthesmos (National Republican Greek League).

exile in France by royalists after two attempted *coups d'etat* in the early 1930's. The leader in Greece was Colonel Napoleon Zervas. In its original programme it strongly denounced George II and his court, and demanded a free election at the end of the war to establish a democratic regime which it obviously expected to be republican. It never developed the popular support nor the organisational strength of EAM, but did have major influence in some areas of Greece. The other, more minor, resistance groups differed on many political points, but all had one principle in common--opposition to the return of the King. Despite unanimity on this point, efforts to unify the various groups were in vain. In particular, EAM and EDES saw each other as enemies and often seemed to view the other as more dangerous and undesirable than the Germans.

The Harling Mission made contact with both EAM and EDES and established liaison officers with the headquarters of each. From the outset, the British supplied money, arms, and equipment, more or less equally. The principal aim was military, in terms of tying down large numbers of German troops, interdicting supply lines to North Africa, and preparation for the eventual invasion of Greece. British military authorities, especially the Middle East headquarters in Cairo, valued the resistance movements highly and insisted on support to them, regardless of their political background. The Foreign Office, therefore, came into conflict with both SOE and the military in their insistence on continuing the sponsorship of the King and the

Government-in-Exile in the face of the anti-royalist attitude of the resistance groups.

The problem was to be further complicated by the personal policy of Winston Churchill. This was one of stubborn support to the King, even after the Foreign Office, late in 1943, began to realise that there was more hope of a stable and pro-British government in Greece if the future of the King was made negotiable.

The fact that there were to be three conflicting British policies towards Greece only emerged in March 1943, as it became evident that the King had little popular following inside or outside Greece. There was also the strong possibility that the resistance elements might establish an anti-royalist government in Greece at the liberation, before the British could install the King and his administration. This in itself would be undesirable, but the outcome would be worse if the result was a strongly anti-British government.

It is not clear whether the Foreign Office was more disturbed by SOE's involvement in political matters, or by the contents of the first reports of the liaison officers. Not only did these stress the unpopularity of the King, but they included demands of the resistance for a promise by the King that he would submit himself to a plebiscite before returning to Greece. The idea of a plebiscite was suggested at the same time by the office of the Minister of State in Cairo,[40] but the Foreign Office seems to have recognised its

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[40]Minister of State telegram 528, 7 March, FO371/37216/R2069.

existence for the first time from the initial Harling reports.[41] The demand for a definite promise of a plebiscite was to be the major issue in Greek politics inside and outside Greece for the next three years. It was also to be one of the most intractable problems for the British in their relationships with Greece for the same period.

The revelation that SOE officers were involving themselves in political affairs in Greece, and were giving support to anti-monarchist groups of guerrillas, roused the Foreign Office to battle with both SOE and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Orme Sargent wrote to the Director General of SOE on 14 March complaining about the actions of the Harling Mission, and suggesting that relations be broken off with guerrilla bands which did not support the King, or at least that these should receive no further support unless they agreed to accept the return of the King and the Government-in-Exile. SOE defended its actions and pointed out that breaking off relations or support would drive the resistance

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[41]The initial Harling reports were made into a summary by SOE and sent in this form to the Foreign Office. Piers Dixon minuted on this summary that Harling's commander, Colonel Myers, was devising a political programme and in so doing had generated the idea of a plebiscite (7 March, FO371/37201/R2050). Myers' actual messge (3407/8, 24 January 1943, Woodhouse Papers, Liddell-Hart Archive, File Woodhouse I/5) strongly suggests that the concept of plebiscite came from Zervas, and was not an interpretation or an inspiration on the part of Myers. The specific word 'plebiscite' probably has some significance in analysing later arguments with George II, who, when making what he thought were concessions to non-royalist views, consistently refused to use this word.

groups concerned into direct opposition and ensure future chaos.[42]

In a strongly worded memorandum sent to the Chiefs of Staff the next day, the Foreign Office expressed the opinion that `far more importance must be attached to building up a strong Greek Government able to control the country and ensure that it will not lapse into chaos or civil war when we land troops in Greece, than to such ephemeral damage as can be done to the Axis through subversive activities carried on in the present phase of the war when we can offer no direct threat to the Axis occupation of Greece.' They asked the Chiefs of Staff for a `ruling' as to the precise value of sabotage by the resistance, since supporting leftist and anti-royalist bodies amounted to strengthening the opposition to the monarchy. The Foreign Office made it clear that they were not suggesting that SOE break off relations with specific resistance groups, which contradicts the letter to SOE. The memorandum concluded by saying that the Prime Minister approved their position.[43]

Simultaneously, the Foreign Office proposed that a new directive to SOE should include, `. . . it is of growing importance now that we should build up the King and the Greek Government. Every effort should therefore be made to avoid strengthening or encouraging anti-monarchist elements in Greece, even if this may mean dispensing with their

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[42]Sargent's letter has not been located but its contents are clear from the SOE reply of 16 March, FO371/37195/R2432.

[43]Memorandum, 15 March, FO371/37222/R2363.

services in particular cases.' SOE objected strongly; the Chiefs of Staff informed the Foreign Office that they hoped political considerations would not be allowed to hamper or reduce the good work being done by the guerrilla bands. They saw no objection to instructions to the British Liaison Officers to let it be known to guerrilla leaders that they had the King of Greece and his government to thank for the support given them.[44]

It was in the atmosphere of Greek army revolts, changes in the Government-in-Exile, its move to Cairo, and unpopular political reports from SOE, that a new policy statement was hammered out in London in mid-March 1943. Much of this new document was identical in meaning with that of October 1942, but there were differences of emphasis. The definite declaration in October that `we do not intend to restore the King by force' was no longer included. The suggestion that a plebiscite should be held on the future of the King was strongly resisted. There was grudging approval for the idea of holding elections if there was `a strong demand for an alternative to the Tsouderos Governemnt', which in itself suggests a British intention to permit a continuation of a non-elected royalist government indefinitely. This is emphasised by the words: `We strongly deprecate the raising of the Constitutional issue which would call the existing monarchial regime into question.'

The only recognition of the strength of the opposition to the King is the statement that there was no certainty

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[44]Foreign Office minute, 15 March, and Ismay's letter, 17 March, FO371/37195/R2431, and R2434.

that the King and his government would be able to assume control peacefully when Greece was liberated. To overcome this difficulty, much emphasis was placed on an extensive propaganda campaign to be directed towards the people of Greece to build support for the King. The theme was to be not so much the merits of the King and his government, but the fact that they had the support of the British. There was to be included an appeal to `the fundamental Anglo-philism of the Greek people´.

With repect to relations with the resistance groups, the new policy was further from the Foreign Office view than that proposed by the Chiefs of Staff:

> In view of the operational importance attached to subversive activities in Greece, there can be no question of S.O.E. refusing to have dealings with a given group merely on the grounds that political sentiments of the group are opposed to the King and Government, but subject to special operational necessity S.O.E. should always veer in the direction of groups willing to support the King and Government and furthermore impress on such other groups as may be anti-monarchist the fact that the King and Government enjoy the fullest support of H.M.G.

The tone of this document indicates a marked difference of attitude towards the Greek political situation. Earlier statements implied that the British hoped that the King could be restored along with an intention to bring this about. There was also the implication that it might not be possible, and that some alternative course might have to be devised. The March statement initiates an integrated campaign to overcome opposition with detailed instructions on propaganda techniques and on how SOE should deal with resistance groups opposed to the King. There was no longer

any suggestion that the King or his government might have to be abandoned. In short, the King was to be upheld regardless.

This change may have been the result of the disturbances in the Greek Army, or because Churchill was acting as Foreign Secretary when the new statement was being prepared. Its contents and instructions for implementation were sent to the Minister of State in Cairo as a message `from the Prime Minister' instead of being incorporated into a Foreign Office telegram.[45] The newer and stronger statement may represent Churchill's own feelings rather than those of the Foreign Office. Certainly, the new policy is in keeping with Churchill's determination to restore the King at all costs, and marks the beginning of a divergence between the Foreign Office and Churchill with regard to Greece.

The policy statement of March represents the strongest British position in defence of the King during the war. From this time the Foreign Office, if not Churchill, was gradually modifying its position, as it came to realise the real strength of opposition to the King. These modifications should have pleased the Americans and attracted their support, but the latter maintained their unhelpful attitude, both in failing to assist in influencing the King and his government, and, in some cases, by unwarranted interference.

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[45]Statement of policy in Churchill's telegram 871 to Cairo, 18 March (not located), repeated to the British Embassy in Washington as Foreign Office telegram 2070, 30 March, marked as being from 'Mr Churchill, Foreign Office' (CAB122/742).

The series of modifications in British policy appears in hindsight to have been unnecessarily torturous; they suggest a complete reluctance to accept the actual situation, and a set of concessions made grudgingly and regretfully. There were factors which did contribute to the process and to some degree excuse what often seems pure stubborness.

A major problem was that of obtaining the cooperation of the King in implementing a policy which would make him more acceptable to the Greek people and less of an issue for the left wing of the resistance to exploit. What was essential was an unequivocal statement by the King that he would accept the verdict of a plebiscite in which the Greek people decided whether or not they wanted the restoration of the monarchy. From mid-1943 onwards the British urged the King to make such a statement; as a result of this urging, George II made a number of promises, none of which were entirely clear and, hence, satisfactory to those who claimed to represent the Greek people.

There is, of course, doubt as to whether any statement would have been acceptable to EAM or its supporters; the question of the King's restoration must be seen as the main political issue being used by EAM to maintain its popularity in Greece and not as the fundamental problem. If the King had agreed to the most concessionary formula which could have been devised, or even have abdicated in favour of a republican, but moderate, government, EAM would have found another issue.

As it was, the King came closer to accepting a plebiscite, but other matters arose which made it possible for him to avoid a definite statement. These concerned the question of when the plebiscite should be held in relation to the liberation, and whether the King should return to Greece before the vote on restoration was taken.

6. The Support of Zervas for the King

The Foreign Office dislike for the resistance groups should now have diminished so far as EDES was concerned. On 9 March Zervas sent a message by way of the British Mission to the King and Government-in-Exile, pledging his support during the period of the German occupation. He promised to welcome the return of the King if it should be as a result of an expression of the people's will. To the surprise of everyone involved, he went on to say that if the British wanted the return of the King even without such an expression (the term plebiscite is not used), 'we will not oppose'. The use of the term 'we' was understood by those in Cairo and London to mean that Zervas was speaking both for himself and for his movement, but it is clear that he did not consult the other leaders of EDES before making this

commitment.[46] For this reason EDES as a whole could be considered as pro-royalist or pledged to the support of the Government-in-Exile.

The immediate result of the Zervas letter was a reply to Zervas by George II which thanked `all the officers and men of the forces fighting in Greece against the enemy . . .´ and went on to state that `The King after his return to Greece, will base himself on the will of the people and will follow the opinion which the people will express freely on all questions concerning them.´[47]

The initial reaction of the Foreign Office was unenthusiastic. Zervas was described as `leftist, but anti-communist´. It was assumed that Zervas´s statement that he would welcome back the King as a result of the people´s will was a demand for a plebiscite; the willingness to accept the King in any case was `very interesting´. It was pointed out that Zervas made no mention of the Government-in-Exile, to which the Foreign Office wished to give equal support.[48]

While the Zervas letter did little immediately to change the Foreign Office view of Zervas and EDES, gradually EDES gained favour as it became clear that EAM was a serious

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[46]Text of the message in translated cablese form in FO371/37194/R2266. The accuracy of this English version is vouched for by Myers in the accompanying notes. Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece* (London: Hart-Davis, 1976), pp. 35-36, provides the background for the initiation of this message, suggesting that Zervas´ *volte-face* was the result of a denunciation by the Government-in-Exile of both EDES and EAM, which forced Zervas to decide between communism and monarchy. Zervas´s failure to consult with other EDES leaders is based on Woodhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 36 and n. 54; and *Apple of Discord*, pp. 74-75.

[47]Letter, 21 March, FRUS, 1943, IV, 131.
[48]Minute, 14 March, FO371/37194/R2266.

threat to the return of the King and the Government-in-Exile. Perhaps the most important impact of the exchange of letters between Zervas and the King was that it gave the Foreign Office the idea that the King's reply amounted to a promise to permit the people of Greece to decide on the future of the monarchy.[49]

7. American Reaction to the Modified Policy

The March policy statement was sent by Churchill to the British Embassy in Washington for transmittal to the State Department. The Embassy informed the Foreign Office that they considered it undesirable to provide the Americans with the statement as written, because it might create the impression that the British were committed to the monarchy 'as a permanent solution'. This might grate on American republican sympathies, or be seen to violate the spirit of the Atlantic Charter. It was recommended that the substance of the new policy be given to the State Department, but be introduced by a section stressing that the final form of government for Greece was a matter for the Greek people to decide. This would continue by pointing out that the only nucleus presently available for a stable government immediately after liberation was that provided by the King. The Foreign Office agreed with this suggestion.[50]

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[49]Perhaps first demonstrated by Laskey's minute of 4 June, FO371/37202/R4717.

[50]Washington telegram 1590, 4 April; Foreign Office telegram 2300, 8 April, FO371/37195/R3093.

The amended text was passed to the State Department who were told that it was a reply to the questions put to Strang by Murray on 29 March (*supra*, p. 20), although it does not provide clear or complete answers. It did respond to the question about a plebiscite by saying that H.M.G. strongly deprecated the immediate raising of the Constitutional issue concerning the monarchy. The other matter, that of the return of the King prior to elections, was not approached directly. It was indicated that the British would not object to the holding of elections `at a moment considered appropriate by Allied Commanders', from context meaning at some point after the return of the King and his government. In substance, the Americans were told that the British did not intend a plebiscite or elections prior to the return of the King.[51]

The State Department mulled this over for some time before replying. On 2 July they handed the British Embassy a memorandum which welcomed all the points they could agree with. At the same time, it expressed definite concern that the return of the King without the approval of the Greek people could lead to civil disturbances requiring intervention by Allied troops. It went on to say that the United States Government was not prepared to undertake, or actively associate itself with, measures designed to enable the King and his government `to obtain the support of the Greek people and reinforce their authority with regard to the Greek armed forces'.[52]

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[51]Aide-Memoire, 27 April, FRUS, 1943, IV, 131-132.
[52]*Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

8. The King's 4 July 1943 Declaration

In May, Leeper suggested to the Foreign Office that some new statement by the King was needed, if he were to win the support of Greek public opinion. Such a statement should be 'clear, definite and practical'.[53] Dixon, in the Foreign Office, took the same view, although it is not clear whether this was a result of Leeper's suggestion. Dixon specifically mentioned a promise of a plebiscite, although he was convinced that such an action could not be taken until 'normal conditions' had returned.[54]

With the approval of Eden, Leeper was told to urge the King to make a new statement in which he would promise to submit the question of the return of the monarchy to a popular vote, along with a declaration that he would not establish a dictatorship again and would maintain the existing constitution as restored in February 1942. This statement would then be endorsed by the British Government. The instructions also dealt with the matter of whether the King would return to Greece prior to the plebiscite.[55] This problem, which was eventually to become as critical as that of the plebiscite itself, came to the surface accidentally. It appears that the Foreign Office

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[53]Letters, 12 and 24 May, FO371/37231/R4505 and 37202/R4717.

[54]Minute, 26 May, FO371/37202/R4666.

[55]Minute, 10 June, and Foreign Office telegrams 81 and 82, 15 June, *Ibid.*, R4717.

had not thought of it since the idea of a plebsicite had been rejected as recently as the declaration of 18 March.

On 20 May, the Allied Territories (Balkans) Committee, a group of diplomats and military officials operating under the auspices of the Minister of State for the Middle East in Cairo, discussed general policy with regard to the return of Allied Governments to their homes upon liberation. Among the items considerd was a draft aide-memoire prepared by Leeper for transmittal to George II and Tsouderos, which was mainly a reminder that `a promise had been made to the poeple of the world that they will be permitted to choose their own government' upon liberation, apparently a general formula applicable to all countries to be liberated. The committee approved Leeper's draft and instructed him to forward it to the King and his Prime Minister, after he had made it clear to them verbally that the Greek King would <u>not</u> enter Greece during the first phase of occupation.[55]

The King was duly informed, and objected strongly to the verbal instruction, on grounds that it would diminish his prestige with the Greek people. He felt that he should enter Greece with the invading troops, although he was willing to place himself under the complete jurisdiction of the Allied Commander. He would take only his Prime Minister with him. Leeper, in reporting the King's reaction, suggested that the King's presence might lead to hostile demonstrations during military operations. Eden made marginal comments: `I had not heard of this. Clearly the King

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[55]Extract from A.T.B. (43) 4th Meeting, FO371/37202\R5020. Underlining in original.

must go. He cannot be left behind.' and, with regard to possible disorders, 'It is most unlikely.' On a similar message from the Commander-in-Chief Middle East concerning the King's return, Eden wrote: 'I feel much sympathy for the King in this.'[57]

The Foreign Office staff was unhappy with this unforeseen development, but recognised that the problem was bound to arise. In an analysis by Dixon, it was accepted that the arrangement might be interpreted as 'an imposition of the King on the Greek people by British bayonets'. If the Greek Prime Minister accompanied the King it might be taken as a British attempt to impose a government as well. On the other hand, it was felt that permitting the immediate return would avoid resentment on the part of the King and would strengthen his prestige. It was also suggested that his return would 'settle once and for all the question of the King's future', which implies a continuing Foreign Office determination to restore the King regardless of Greek opinion. Later in the same minute, Dixon suggested that the best way to avoid hostile demonstrations would be the prior promise by the King of a plebiscite on the monarchy question. On balance, Dixon felt that the King should return with the troops.

The authorities in Cairo also took note of the King's strong feelings. At a meeting of the Middle East Defence Committee, it was proposed that the King should accompany

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[57]Eden's comments on Leeper's telegrams 101 and 102, both 22 May, *ibid.*, R4594 and R4595.

the invading troops, under the orders of the Allied Commander-in-Chief, and that no member of the Greek Government should accompany him. The idea was immediately accepted by the Foreign Office and the War Office.[58]

Eden pointed out to Churchill that the Cairo Defence Committee was entirely right in recommending that the King should return with the Allied forces, so long as it was in a purely military capacity. Churchill replied somewhat testily that he saw no reason to call `his Kingship' into question. George II should go back as he left, as King, presumably objecting to the King being required to return in a purely military capacity. Eden explained, using Dixon's phrase, that this was necessary in order to avoid the impression that the King was being reimposed by British bayonets. Further, if he returned as the sovereign, he might get in the way of the Allied Commander.[59] The net result was that the proposal of the Middle East Defence Committee was established as the policy concerning the King's return for some time, presumably with Churchill's grudging authority.

The new declaration by the King demanded by the Foreign Office and Leeper was issued on 4 July 1943, and was to become the basic statement of his position until the second civil war of December 1945. Leeper later implied that the statement was devised by the King,[60] but the truth is that

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[58]Minutes of 23 and 28 May, and Minister of State telegram 1287, 26 May, *ibid.*, R4666.

[59]Minutes of 12, 15, and 21 June 1943, PREM3 211/15.

[60]*When Greek Meets Greek* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1950), p. 30.

it was hammered out by Leeper and the Foreign Office, with interpolations by members of the Government-in-Exile, along with limitations demanded by the King. The essential points were to be a statement that the King was willing to submit the regime to a popular vote, and a clear indication that the King would accompany the landing of British troops in his capacity of Commander-in-Chief of Greek forces. No member of the Government-in-Exile would go with him.[61]

As might have been expected, SOE objected to the mention of the King's return on grounds that Greeks at home would see this as a trick to re-establish the monarchy by force.[62] The Foreign Office took no heed of this objection, perhaps because it was received after they had given Leeper permission to discuss the proposal with Tsouderos. While Tsouderos initially agreed to the draft text, he reported to Leeper that it had been necessary to remove mention of the King's return because of pressure from other members of the Government-in-Exile. Their objections, Leeper thought, were based on a fear that this point would do too much to increase the King's popularity.[63] Tsouderos was able to obtain the King's approval to the amended text.

The final version, broadcast on 4 July, included a promise that a constituent assembly would be called within six months of liberation to decide `the institutions by

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[61] FO371/37202/R4717. While the Foreign Office specifically called for a plebiscite in their internal minutes, the term was not used in their message to Leeper of 15 June.

[62] Glenconner's memorandum, 30 June, FO371/37222/R5684.

[63] Leeper's telegram 156, 2 July, *ibid.*, R5764.

which Greece must endow herself in sympathy with the forward march of democracy´. The King stated that he was confident that `no Greek and least of all myself would fail to respect the decision of the constituent assembly´. There was also a promise that the existing cabinet would resign as soon as the government returned to Athens, in order that a fully representative administration could take its place.[64]

In retrospect, this would seem to be a definite commitment by the King to allow the Greek people to decide on the future of the maonarchy, but through an elected body rather than by direct vote. The word `plebiscite´ is not used, a matter which raised doubts in the minds of many as to whether the King´s proposal would really be acceptable. The more important problem at the time was that the declaration said nothing about whether the King would return to Greece before the people had expressed their desires. This omission seems critical, since the view did exist in anti-royalist circles that the entry of the King with the invasion troops would be tantamount to his restoration, regardless of any promise to consult the people. This view was probably buttressed by the recollection of George II´s broken promise in 1935 not to install a dictatorship.

With this declaration as evidence of the King´s good intentions now a matter of record, the British Government began an attempt to overcome the American objections to the policy statement of 18 March, which were contained in the State Department memorandum of 2 July (*supra*, pp. 36). One of the initial British reactions to the Department´s

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[64]Full text, *loc. cit.*

position did concern the timing of the King's return. It was felt by Foreign Office staff that the United States would never sanction the return of the King with the invasion forces. Therefore, discussion of the point should be avoided. In replying to the American memorandum, it should only be said that everything possible would be done to assist the return of the King and his government, 'unless we think it would be opposed by a large majority'. This should be followed by a statement that the British Government did not anticipate such opposition and that the recent declarations by the King, especially that of 4 July, should minimise the danger. The suggestion that the return of the King should not be discussed was overruled by Sargent, and a detailed point-by-point reply was sent to the State Department on 4 August.[65]

This stated that the King would return with the invasion troops, although he would not be accompanied by any member of his government. The major argument advanced for this decision was that a request from an Allied sovereign could not be 'lightly refused'. The message included a detailed statement of the danger of a civil war being started by resistance groups in Greece as soon as Axis control was removed. It was felt that this danger was greater that the risk of disturbances which might be caused by the King's return. The hope was expressed that the King would be able to resolve the party quarrels and prevent the

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[65]The proposal to avoid discussion of the King's return is that in Laskey's minute, 7 July, in FO371/37197/R5865. Underlining in quotation in the original.

establishment of `tyrannical rule by any one individual or group´. In conclusion, the great benefits expected from the King´s statement of 4 July were emphasised and described as offering `the best chances of assuring stability and democratic rule in Greece´.[55]

This aide-memoire is evidence either of a failure to understand the situation in Greece or an attempt to deceive the Americans. It is difficult to believe that the Foreign Office did not consider the possibility that the return of the King before a popular vote was taken could be an issue which could spark off civil war. It is equally difficult to believe that they could think the King capable of resolving political quarrels, given the record of Greek politics in the twentieth century. In any case, events made this message obsolete by the time the Americans had digested it.

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[55] Instructions to the Washington Embassy in Foreign Office telegram 807, 17 July, *loc. cit.*; text of aide-memoire, FRUS, 1943, IV, 137-141.

Chapter II

The Visit of the Andarte Delegation to Cairo and Its Effect on British Policy August-November 1943

1. Leeper's Initial Attitude and the Foreign Office Reaction

Before the new British policy and the new declaration by the King could have any effect, events in Cairo forced a fresh new analysis of the problems, and, eventually, a major change in Foreign Office policy. On 13 August 1943, six andarte[1] leaders from Greece arrived in Cairo, flown out from an airstrip built in the middle of occupied territory by the British Mission. The delegation included four members of the EAM, two of whom were members of the Communist Party. The initial intention had been to bring out one representative each of EAM, EDES, and a third resistance group, EKKA, but at the last moment and without warning to Cairo, the communists insisted on adding three more delegates. They were accompanied by Brigadier Myers, the commander of the mission, and by David Wallace, who had

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[1]The Greek word 'andarte', meaning guerrilla or irregular fighter, was commonly used during the occupation period to denote members of the resistance.

been dropped into Greece as a representative of Eden and Leeper.[2]

The arrival of the delegates led to immediate problems. No one had anticipated what their attitude would be, nor the intensity with which they would make demands. Myers had warned SOE Cairo of the importance of this visit to the future of Greece, but it is not definite that this message was passed to Leeper or the Foreign Office.[3] Prior to departure Myers had achieved some measure of agreement amongst the three guerrilla groups on a programme of cooperation with the Government-in-Exile, but nothing was discussed concerning the future of the monarchy.[4] Leeper later claimed that he had had only short notice of the arrival of the group, and that he had been told that their mission was the discussion of military questions.[5] His own messages show that he knew of the impending visit, and

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[2]Accounts in English by participants in the visit of the group to Cairo are limited to Myers, *The Greek Entanglement*, and 'The Andarte Delegation to Cairo,' in *British Policy towards Wartime Resistance*, ed. Phyllis Auty and Richard Clogg (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 147-166; and Leeper, *When Greek Meets Greek*. Valuable discussion of the visit, including material from Greek sources, is provided by Richard Clogg, 'Pearls from Swine' and C. M. Woodhouse, 'Summer 1943,' both in Auty and Clogg; and Papastratis, *British Policy towards Greece*, pp. 104-112.

[3]Myers, 'The Andarte Delegation,' p. 149.
[4]Myers, *Greek Entanglement*, pp. 238-243.
[5]Leeper, *When Greek Meets Greek*, p. 31.

welcomed it as an opportunity to clarify the future of relations with the resistance movements.[6]

He was impressed with Myers at their first face-to-face meeting, despite his earlier complaints concerning Myers' supposed interference in political matters.[7] Leeper made a drastic change in his position with regard to the King after discussions with Myers, Wallace, and the delegates. He seems to have been heavily influenced by his private talks with Wallace, who had been sent into Greece more or less as Leeper's private investigator. Wallace had been expected to bring back evidence to show that Myers had exaggerated the opposition to the King within Greece; instead, he confirmed Myers reports.

The andarte delegation were joined in Cairo by Georgios Exindaris, a liberal political who had recently escaped from Greece, without the aid of SOE. Together, these seven men of differing political views began a strenuous attack on the policies of the Government-in-Exile, urging a more representative cabinet and a statement by the King that he would not return to Greece without a plebiscite.

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[6]Leeper's letters, 21 July and 13 August 1943, FO371/37204/R7217 and R7884. Bickham Sweet-Escott, a senior SOE official, recalls speaking to Leeper before the arrival of the delegation and finding him delighted at the prospect of meeting them (*Baker Street Irregular* (London: Methuen, 1965), p. 174). Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War* (London: HMSO, 1970-1976), Vol. III, 392-393, accepts Leeper's claim that he had no previous warning, but cites no evidence. The matter is discussed in detail by Clogg, 'Pearls from Swine,' p. 182.

[7]Leeper's earlier disapproval of Myers is shown by his letters, 12 May, FO371/37202/4504; and 19 June, 37197/R5717.

As a result of these demands and talks with Myers and Wallace, Leeper cabled to London that the case against the King was very strong. He reported that Tsouderos had told George II that a broad coalition representing most factions in Greece could be formed only if the King would agree not to return until a plebiscite was held. Leeper asked for guidance from the Foreign Office, but clearly was pressing for instructions to advise the King to adopt this proposal. On the same day, Leeper wrote a long letter to Sargent making an even stronger case for forcing the King to accept. Eden was not at all pleased. On the margin of Leeper's telegram he wrote: `Surely this is not fair to the King.' and `I am very doubtful about this. The King has proved himself our friend. We must do the best we can for him.'

Leeper sent a second cable that day, reporting with obvious approval that Myers and Wallace agreed that EAM now realised that only a policy of cooperation with the British could gain them support, and that they must now work with other national groups in a coalition. The only way in which they might gain significant popular support would be to exploit the issue of the King's early return. From this, Leeper drew the conclusion that, once the King announced that he would put off his return until the people called him, political movements in Greece would become `steadily more national and less communist'.

On this message, Eden noted that he agreed with the hypothesis that only a pro-British policy could gain support, but British policy supported the King, with the implication that EAM's only chance of success would be a

policy of backing George II. He had doubts about the suggestion that EAM could obtain backing by exploitng the issue of the King's return.[e] Sargent submitted a draft reply to Eden, which was approved and dispatched. In forwarding the draft, Sargent noted that he hoped it would `check the sudden tendency in Cairo to sell out to the E. A. M. delegation'. He admitted that the situation was `confoundedly difficult', because the King might find himself without a government if he stood firm.

Sargent's telegram goes a long way towards an understanding of the real policy of the Foreign Office and Eden at this time. There was a definite feeling that the insertion of left-wing representatives into the Government-in-Exile would result in a republican government resolved to give the King no opportunity to appeal to his adherents in Greece. There was a qualification that the simultaneous inclusion of representatives of `Royalist elements in Greece' might avoid this result. The London officials

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[e]Leeper's telegrams 199 (FO371/37198/R7516) and 201 (37204/R7548), and his letter to Sargent (*ibid.*, R7884), all dated 13 August 1943. Leeper's initial attitude to Myers after his arrival in Cairo, and Wallace's emphasis on the opposition to the King, are brought out best in these three documents, especially in the letter to Sargent. Wallace's two reports written before he returned from Greece (in *British Reports from Greece*, ed. Lars Baerentzen (Copenhagen: Museum Tuscalanum Press, 1982) do not make a strong case against the King. The reports contained in the delayed telegrams (37204/R8088) again do not emphasis the opposition to the King, although they show that it existed to a significant degree. Myers provides two accounts of his first meetings with Leeper in Cairo which are completely consonant with Leeper's 13 August reports (*Greek Entanglement*, pp. 248-249; and 'The Andarte Delegation,' pp. 150-152). Leeper's 1950 memoir, *When Greek Meets Greek*, gives no hint of this initial attitude towards Myers.

wanted any decision as to whether the King should return at liberation to be postponed `until nearer the time´. Should the King publicly announce his willingness to postpone his return until a plebiscite could be held, a left-wing dominated government would so influence the Greek people that the vote would go against him. Such a promise would be tantamount to signing his abdication. The Foreign Office was still clinging to the belief that there was substantial support for the King within Greece, contrary to every report it had received from SOE and even contrary to the views Leeper was now expressing.[9]

Before Leeper received this message, he sent a further report of the discussions between Tsouderos and the delegates, again stressing the difficulties Tsouderos believed would result if the King returned to Greece at the time of liberation. The Foreign Office somehow saw in this report evidence that the opposition to the King was weakening. They also deduced that the fact that the andarte delegation came to Cairo confirmed this idea.[10]

Leeper at first does not seem to have recognised that his new views were being rebuffed. His immediate response to Sargent´s message only pointed out that the Foreign Office analysis of what would happen in Greece if the King

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[9]Foreign Office telegram 128, 16 August, FO371/37204/R7548.

[10]Leeper´s telegram 204, 16 August, FO371/37198/R7641; and Foreign Office telegram 131, 17 August, *ibid.*, R7648.

delayed his return differed from that of Tsouderos.[11] It is difficult to establish the point at which he did understand the Foreign Office position because his reports for the next week are taken up almost entirely with attacks on Myers and SOE. On about 16 August, Wallace found that messages he had sent to Leeper from Greece had never been delivered by SOE, through whose channels they had been sent. While these messages contained no information or opinions which differed from the reports sent back by Myers, or from Wallace's discussions with Leeper once he had arrived in Cairo, Leeper took the view that SOE had deliberately withheld the messages from him.[12]

Almost from the moment he found out about the withheld messages, he began to hold Myers responsible for all the difficulties in Cairo, criticising him as one who had `no glimmer of political understanding' and as naive concerning EAM. Leeper also put forward the view that Wallace had been too much under the influence of Myers, and that he had been in a daze when he first arrived in Cairo and unable to

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[11]Leeper's telegram 210, 18 August, FO371/37198/R7742. His telegram 212, 19 August, *ibid.*, R7798, also indicates that he did not understand the meaning of Sargent's telegram.

[12]Leeper's telegram 205, 16 August, FO371/37204/R7754. His full fury is best illustrated by his letter, 21 August, *ibid.*, R8216; his telegram 225, 25 August, *ibid.*, R8047; and his letter, 25 August, 37199/R8314. The contents of the messages and the circumstances surrounding the delay are discussed by Woodhouse, 'Summer 1943,' pp. 141-142. Woodhouse makes a convincing case for believing that the delay was not deliberate, and it is difficult to see what motive SOE would have had for deliberately withholding the information. Some of the reports reached London by 10 August; Leeper states that he saw none of them until 22 August (his letter, 23 August, 37204/R8088).

provide an independent view of conditions within Greece. This view is difficult to sustain, particularly in view of Wallace's conversations in the Foreign Office in September, when he could hardly have been under the influence of Myers (*infra*, pp. 62). It is equally difficult to understand why he took out most of his anger on Myers, who certainly could have had nothing to do with the delayed delivery, but Myers was an easy target, as the man who had brought the delegation out of Greece in the first place. Leeper may have criticised Myers so stridently in order to cover up his own embarrassment for having accepted the demands of the andartes initially.[13]

Leeper's anger directed at Myers and SOE was so great that it is difficult to determine just what went on in Cairo with regard to the delegates in the next ten days. Leeper himself wondered whether Sargent's `interest in the political crisis here has not been subordinated to what I am sure is his much greater interest in the revelations I have been producing about S.O.E.'[14] Myers, the only other British

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[13]Myers, in 'The Andarte Delegation,' p. 152, states that he felt that Leeper, on or about 17 August, received a message from the Foreign Office to support the King and oppose the proposals of the delegation from the mountains. Myers assumed that it was this message which caused Leeper's change of attitude towards him. It is not clear whether Myers, writing this in 1975, was aware of Sargent's telegram of 16 August. Leeper's messages and correspondence in the period 16-23 August would suggest that it was not Sargent's telegram, but the withholding of Wallace's messages which influenced Leeper, unless the latter was criticisng Myers to hide his shame.

[14]Leeper's letter, 21 August, FO371/37204/R8216.

participant who has left a useful record,[15] was given little information by Leeper after Sargent's message; he was not even aware of its contents although he guessed that Leeper had received new policy instructions from London at about this time. The course of events must be reconstructed from occasional references in Leeper's telegrams and letters, and from Greek sources.

While Leeper was coming to terms with Sargent's message, the delegates became even more insistent. Together with Exindaris and Kannellopoulos, they made a formal demand on 17 August that the King should not return until the Greek people had expressed their will. Two days later Tsouderos and the Greek cabinet made a public statement to the effect that this request represented the will of a large segment of Greek public opinion.[16] The delegates then asked that they should be given three posts in the Cabinet, the Ministries of Interior, War, and Justice, to be adminstered from within Greece. The right-wing members of the existing cabinet refused this demand and threatened resignation.[17] While

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[15]The Commander-in-Chief, Wilson, in *Eight Years Overseas* (London: Hutchinson, n.d. (1948)), pp. 164-168, discusses the visit of the andartes in a balanced fashion, but provides little in the way of specific detail. *Personal Experience 1939-1946* (London: Constable, 1962), the memoirs of Richard Casey, the British Minister of State in the Middle East at the time, contains no information on the delegation's visit.

[16]Clogg, 'Pearls from Swine,' p. 186, citing the account of the EDES delegate, Komninos Pyromaglou, *O Doureios Ippos* (Athens, 1958), pp. 154, 155.

[17]Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord*, pp. 153-155; Sargent's telegram CONCRETE 419, 20 August, FO371/37198/R7742.

Leeper avoided admitting that he twice changed his mind,[18] he had, shortly after first meeting the delegation, pressed for `an all-embracing coalition´ as the only solution to the Greek problem.[19]

The net result of Sargent´s telegram was the forced return of the guerrilla delegation to the mountains without any definite reply to their demands. The delegates managed to delay their return for two weeks, which brought Churchill´s wrath down on Leeper. They finally returned to Greece in the second week of September.[20]

2. The King´s Appeal to Churchill and Roosevelt

From the beginning of the visit, the King was aware of the demands being made and the effect they were having on Tsouderos and the remainder of the Cabinet. On 18 August, he sent identical messages to Churchill and Roosevelt, then both in Canada for the Quebec Conference. He ask for their advice, expressing the view that his message of 4 July was sufficient to cover the problems. He asked specifically

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[18]The suggestion that Leeper was reluctant to admit that he had briefly backed the wrong horse is based on a comparison of his views in *When Greek Meets Greek*, pp. 30-33, with the contents of his telegrams 210, 212, 215, and 217 (19, 19, 21, and 21 August) in FO371/37198/R7742, R7798, R7819, and R7851; his letter, 21 August, 37204/R8216; and his letter, 25 August, 37199/R8314.

[19]Letter, 13 August, FO371/37204/R7884.

[20]Myers, ´The Andarte Delegation,´ p. 153; Leeper´s telegram 222, 23 August, and Churchill´s WELFARE 473, 30 August, both FO371/37198/R7950; Clogg, ´Pearls from Swine,´ pp. 186-192.

that he should be allowed to accompany his troops back into Greece.[21]

Churchill apparently had had no part in the preparation of Sargent's message, since he had left London on 4 August to travel to Quebec by sea. In reviewing the King's request, he had no doubts that the King should return with his troops, but did see problems if liberation should be effected by Greek forces without British aid. In that case, the British would have less say about the King, and a coalition Greek Government containing a strong republican element might refuse to allow his immediate return. The King should therefore insist on equal royalist representation in any coalition.[22]

Eden, now in Quebec, brought the letters to the attention of the American Secretary of State and placed it on the agenda for the Roosevelt-Churchill meeting on 22 August. At this meeting, Eden read out a report on the political situation in Greece, which incorporated much of the phraseology and substance of Sargent's telegram. It was strongly urged that the British and American Governments should tell the King that they believed his 4 July statement was that best calculated to serve the interests of Greece,

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[21]Full text of the King's message in Foreign Office telegram CONCRETE 374, 19 August 1943; that to Roosevelt, FRUS, *The Conferences at Washington and Quebec* (hereinafter FRUS, *Quebec*), 1943, p. 915.

[22]Minute, 19 August, PREM3 211/4; Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, V, 416. It was at the Quebec Conference that the two Allied powers agreed that there would be no invasion of the Balkans, which probably accounts for Churchill's change of attitude.

and that the King should make no further statements about his return to Greece at this stage.[23]

Also read out, at Churchill's request, was a message from General Smuts, who made a strong recommendation that no plebiscite be held until Greece was restored to law and order. He also felt that the King might return to Greece in the interim to assist Allied administration. He closed with the recommendation that Churchill raise the matter with Roosevelt, citing a communist takeover in the Balkans as a possible result unless a strong hand was kept on the occupation.[24]

The two reports led to some general discussion of the attitudes which should be taken towards the Governments-in-Exile of `refugee' countries, and a decision that the United Kingdom and the United States should continue to support these governments `generally' until liberation. The official record stated that it was agreed between Churchill and Roosevelt that the British Government should reply to the King, `supporting his contention that he was prepared to return to Greece as soon as possible and submit the question of the Royal House to plebiscite'. This is followed in the offical record by: `The President said the

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[23]Eden's memorandum, prepared by the Foreign office in response to a request from Hull, and sent to Eden as CONCRETE 419, PREM3 211/4; Hull's copy, FRUS, *Quebec*, 1943, pp. 1044-1045. The editors of FRUS suggest that this was sent as CONCRETE 374, but that message transmits the text of George II's appeal to Churchill (FO371/37198/R7758).

[24]Smuts telegram 715, 20 August, and Churchill's reply that he fully concurred with regard to the necessity of supporting the King, (telegram WELFARE 461, 28 August), PREM3 211/4.

United States Government would not take any different position.'

A few days later, a senior State Department official queried this last sentence with Ray Atherton, the American Minister to Canada, who was present at the meeting. The Department was very surprised to see this remark on the record, since the consistent view of the Department had been that the return of the King with the liberating forces would be extremely dangerous. Atherton said that the minutes of the preceedings were misleading, in that the President was referring to the general position with regard to refugee governments and not specfically to the return of George II.[25] It will be seen *infra*, p. 64, that the State Department did not accept Atherton's interpretation.

Eden next day sent a reply in Churchill's name to the King. It did not take the form agreed to by Roosevelt and Churchill, perhaps because the specific mention of a plebiscite might be distasteful to George II. It presented the view that the policy of the 4 July message would best serve the interests of Greece, and the hope that the King could avoid any further statements concerning `your own position when Greece is liberated'.[26]

Churchill sent a second message to George II on 31 August in which he hoped that the King was recovered from a recent illness. He continued by saying: `We are all looking forward to your return to Greece at the head of your

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[25]FRUS, *Quebec*, 1943, p. 933, and n. 26.
[26]Telegram WELFARE 349, 23 August, FO371/37198/R7950; and FRUS, *Quebec*, 1943, p. 1046.

Armies and remaining there until the will of the Greek people is expressed under conditions of tranquility.'[27] This is a more definite statement of British policy than that in his first reply, and perhaps is a better reflection of Churchill's real attitude. It commited Britain to returning the King at the time of liberation and to supporting him there until his future could be decided. The fact that it was sent from Quebec, and included the phrase `all of us' might even have led the King to infer that it represented Roosevelt's attitude as well. No evidence has been found to indicate that the contents of this second message were furnished to the State Department, or to Roosevelt, although Alexander Kirk, the American Ambassador to the Greek Government, twice made passing references to `Churchill's two messages to the King'.[28]

The Americans had great difficulty in framing their reply to George II. The day after the King's request for advice arrived in the State Department, Wallace Murray, now Advisor on Political Relations, sent a memorandum to the Secretary of State recommending that the United States should not encourage George II to return with the invasion, `a decision we are not party to in any case'. In Murray's view, such an action would be in violation of the Atlantic Charter. Instead, the King should negotiate with the

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[27]Telegram WELFARE 490, 31 August 1943, PREM3 211/5.
[28]Kirk's telegrams 57 and 58, 4 and 7 September, FRUS, 1943, IV, 150-151. Presumably Kirk learned of the second message from Leeper.

representatives from Greece and give further assurances that he stood by the 4 July declaration.[29]

A few days later, Adolf Berle, the Assistant Secretary of State, sent another memorandum to Hull concerning the problems arising in Cairo. This appears to have been prompted by reports from Kirk. The American Ambassador had kept the Department informed concerning the visit of the andartes to Cairo and the British and Greek Government's problems in dealing with them. While he sometimes joined with Leeper in making suggestions to Tsouderos and the King, he often did not agree with British policy. He was afraid the United States might become involved in Greek affairs in such a way that it would have to accept some responsibility for British actions, if these should fail.[30]

Berle's memorandum concerned the attitude to be taken towards the King. He felt that the British were committed to the re-establishment of the monarchy, subject to a plebiscite. At the same time, he noted that `the British' asserted that the United States was likewise committed to the King, although the State Department was not aware of any such commitment. He was seeking clarification on this point.[31] After summarising the strength of opposition to the King within Greece, Berle raised the question of an answer to the King's request. If the President did give

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[29]Memorandum, 19 August 1943, NARS 868.00/1274-1/5.

[30]Kirk's telegrams 40, 44, 45, 47, of 17, 19, 20, 22 August, FRUS, 1943, IV, 141-147.

[31]Berle mentioned a letter pending before Sumner Welles, the Undersecretary of State, for this purpose; perhaps an attempt to find out from Roosevelt whether he had indeed made such a commitment.

George II advice as to his course of action, the United States would be committed to supporting it. Further, in view of the fact that the King had sent an identical request for advice to Churchill, it would be highly advisable that the two replies should be in harmony.

The State Department's view was that it would be preferable to establish a small commission of Greeks representing the Government-in-Exile and the other parties or groups. This commission would enter Greece upon liberation with the King remaining abroad until elections could be held. The memorandum ended with a recommendation that Hull should discuss the matter with the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the President in order to arrive at a definite policy to be implemented by the Theatre Commander-in-Chief. There is an implication that Berle intended that the Combined Chiefs of Staff should establish a unified Anglo-American policy, but there is no evidence of any action resulting from this paper.[32]

On 31 August, Berle sent another memorandum to Hull. He now felt that the British were determined to return the King to Greece at the time of liberation, a policy with which the State Department did not agree. He therefore urged Hull to discuss the matter further with Roosevelt and

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[32]Memorandum, 25 August 1943, NARS 868.01/379. Berle used the phrase 'joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington' for the body which was to establish the policy. The fact that 'joint' is not capitalised and the phrase 'in Washington' is added suggests that he meant the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff, the term he used elsewhere in the memorandum, and not the purely American Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Churchill, who were to meet in Washington the following day. There is no evidence that Hull did so; the conversations between Roosevelt and Churchill in the period 1-11 September were almost exclusively devoted to military matters.[33]

There is a strong impression that the staff of the State Department was trying to avoid replying to the King's message, at least until they could come to some satisfactory agreement on a joint Anglo-American policy. On the same day Berle sent his second memorandum to Hull, Kirk pointed out that Churchill's reply to the King had been received in Cairo on 26 August. He followed this up a few days later with the report of a comment by Tsouderos to the effect that anti-royalist circles in Cairo saw the delay in the American reply as evidence of a divergence in Anglo-American policy.[34] On 1 September, the State Department submitted a reply for the President's approval. This was finally delivered on 8 September.

It said only that the President hoped that all Greeks would accept the King's 4 July statement as a guarantee of an opportunity to express their political will at the earliest practical moment, and that they would meanwhile devote themselves to winning the war. Kirk was instructed to inform the King orally that the President would find it difficult to advise him as to his reply to the emissaries

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[33]Memorandum, 31 August, FRUS, 1943, IV, 149.
[34]Kirk's telegrams 52 and 57, 31 August and 6 September, *ibid.*, pp. 149, 150.

from Greece, but that he doubted that any new policy statement at this time would be advisable.[35]

The replies of Churchill and Roosevelt were made known to the Greek Cabinet and the emissaries from Greece (who had not yet departed from Cairo). According to Tsouderos, this produced a calming effect on the Government-in-Exile.[36] Myers suggests that the receipt of the replies from Roosevelt and Churchill stiffened the determination of the King and Tsouderos to stand fast against the delegation, and implies that this was within a few days of 17 August.[37] This is doubtful, since the critical conference with the andartes was that of 21 August; Churchill's first message did not arrive in Cairo until 26 August and his second on 31 August; Roosevelt's on 8 September.

3. The Immediate Effects of the Andarte Visit

The only immediate result of the visit of the andarte delegation to Cairo was the preparation of a detailed statement of policy for issue to all British officers in Greece. This was based on Foreign Office discussions with Myers and Wallace, who had gone to London at about the same

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[35] *Ibid.*, p. 151. It is suggested that the slightly more definite, if negative, message was delivered orally in order that it would not be made public if the King published the replies.

[36] Kirk's telegram 63, 10 September, FRUS, 1943, IV, 152.

[37] 'The Andarte Delegation in Cairo,' p. 152.

time the delegation returned to Greece.[34] This paper, dated 20 September, differed little in fundamentals from Churchill's second message to the King of 31 August, in that it reiterated the determination to return the King to Greece with the liberating armies. The Liaison Officers were to do their best to build the King's reputation and to strengthen those groups which were prepared to accept British policy, while attempting to weaken those who opposed. It recognised that the last point might have to be modified in order to maintain and develop the guerrillas effort, i.e., EAM might have to be tolerated.

The statement included what was probably the first recognition by the Foreign Office that `almost all the most vocal and most powerful elements of the population were opposed to the King's return'. Even with this concession, the view was included that there was a serious risk of civil war breaking out at liberation unless the King was allowed to return and implement his 4 July programme. While Eden approved the statement in draft, he made a marginal comment `This is the weakest link in our argument' against the portion which posited that civil war might occur if the King did not return to carry out his programme.[35]

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[34] They travelled separately and were not interviewed together (Myers, *Greek Entanglement*, pp. 258-259), although there is no evidence that they presented contradictory views.

[35] The statement, in FO371/37222/R8993, is accompanied by a copy of a letter of 8 October from Sargent to Brigadier Hollis of the War Cabinet Office, which makes the influence of Myers and Wallace evident. Sargent's letter to Hollis of 21 October in 37206/R10177, is useful in understanding the statement.

The State Department continued to contemplate its Greek policy. On 10 September, Foy Kohler prepared a memorandum intended to lead to a re-statement of United States policy which, after approval by the President, should be communicated to British authorities, as well as American diplomats involved. This paper set forth the view that the United States Government was now committed to adopt `an attitude not contrary to that of the British as regards the development of the Greek political situation, because of Roosevelt's statement at Quebec that `we would not take any different position to that of the British'.[40] This seemed to disregard the disclaimer by Ambassador Atherton to the effect that Roosevelt had been quoted out of context (*supra*, p. 57).

Presumably this memorandum led to the formulation of the State Department Aide-Memoire of 8 October to the British Embassy, a belated answer to the British note of 4 August (*supra*, p. 43). The reply is hardly a re-statement of U.S. policy, and it is doubtful that it was seen by Roosevelt. The only significant point is the sentence ending `. . . it is the Department's understanding that the President discussed the matter with the Prime Minister and understood that the Foreign Office would reply to the King's telegram, in the sense that the British Government would support the King's contention that he was prepared to return to Greece as soon as possible and would submit the question of the Royal House to plebiscite'.[41] exactly what Roosevelt

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[40]NARS 868.01/369.
[41]FRUS, 1943, IV, 152-154.

had agreed with Churchill; there is a suggestion that the Americans were complaining that Churchill's reply to the King was not sufficiently definite concerning the timing of the King's return or a promise of a plebiscite. There is also a subtle hint that the State Department did not agree with the idea of an immediate return of the King.

The hints were not lost on the British Embassy. In a letter to the Foreign Office of 26 October, Ronald Campbell pointed out that there was still a great divergence in American and British views. He based this on inferences from the Aide-Memoire and from a conversation of a member of his staff with an unnamed official of the State Department. He pointed out that the American memorandum did not comment on many of the arguments set forth in the British note of 4 August; notably those which outlined the reasons for supporting the King, and those which emphasised the dangers of a guerrilla-led civil war unless the King returned with the troops to resolve quarrels and choose a representative provisional government.

He further reported a conversation he had had with Foy Kohler who emphasised the American view that the King should not return until called for and that he should bring leaders of movements within Greece into his Government-in-Exile. Kohler conveyed the impression that the Americans were rather reluctantly `acquiescing in a policy with which they were not in full agreement'. The Foreign Office took cognizance of Campbell's points, but felt that the problems

might be avoided because a new policy with regard to Greece was just being formulated.[42]

4. A Plan to Solve the Greek Problem

Two new factors caused the September 1943 restatement of policy to be short-lived. The first was the decision at the Quebec Conference that future operations in the Balkans would be limited to supply for the guerrillas, minor Commando raids, and strategic bombing.[43] This meant that there would probably be no invasion of Greece by Allied Forces;[44] instead it was quite likely that the liberation of Greece would amount to a re-occupation by the Government-in-Exile after the German forces withdrew.

The second factor was a direct result of the treatment given the andarte delegation to Cairo. Their demands having been ignored, EAM began what is often called the `First Round' of the Greek Civil War, a series of armed attacks on EDES in an attempt to gain control of the entire resistance movement. In addition to weakening the non-Communist elements, it meant the abandonment for the time being of any attacks on the Germans, and the use of British supplied arms

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[42]Campbell's letter, and Foreign Office minutes of 9 and 15 November 1943, FO371/37222/R11214.

[43]CCS 319/5 Final, Report of Conclusions Reached by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, 24 August, paragraph 17, in FRUS, *Quebec*, 1943, p. 1124.

[44]No full-scale Allied invasion was ever planned. There was an asumption that such an action was probable within Greece and, to a considerable extent, within the Foreign Office.

and equipment against pro-British groups. British policy towards Greece would have to take this into account along with all the other problems.

In late September 1943 the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff exchanged letters about the course of action to be taken in the event of a peaceful withdrawal of German troops from Greece. The Chiefs suggested that the return of the King in these circumstances would increase the risk of disturbances.[45] Eden expressed the opinion that the presence or absence of the King was not likely to affect the course of events to any material degree. The Chiefs of Staff learned of Eden's view and made a strong objection.[46] Michael Rose of the Foreign Office accepted that the Chiefs 'had hit on the one dangerously weak link in the argument' i. e., the idea of allowing the King to return immediately. He strongly doubted the assertion in the 20 September statement that the King's return might save Greece from civil war, and recommended that the King should be advised to promise not to return before a plebiscite.[47]

Leeper had still not changed his views on the unpopularity within Greece of the King. On 6 October, he pointed out to the Foreign Office that the probability that only a few British troops would accompany the returning Greek Government made it advisable to explain to the King

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[45]COS(43)595(O), 30 September, CAB122/742.

[46]Foreign Office letter, 10 October and COS reply, 14 October, COS(43)248th, CAB122/742; and minute, 18 October, FO371/37206/R10177.

[47]Minute of 18 October, *loc. cit.*

the danger of an immediate return.[48] On the same day he forwarded a message which led to a substantial change in British policy towards the entire Greek situation. The key points originated with the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Athens, Damaskinos. As developed by Leeper, the new ideas amounted to a three-way sharing of influence in order to pave the way for a peaceful liberation of Greece.[49] In this scheme, General Plastiras, titular head of EDES, should be brought out from Vichy France and sent to the mountains to take charge of that body, with the expectation that he would gradually gain control of most of the resistance movments.[50]

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[48]Telegram 295, FO371/37231/R9703. Churchill minuted to Eden concerning this message: 'This is a sudden change.'

[49]Frank Macaskie, a British officer in hiding in Athens, had close relations with Damaskinos. In late September/early October he escaped from Greece, bringing with him two letters from the Archbishop which contained, *inter alia*, the idea that Damaskinos should be made responsible for law and order in Athens until the arrival of military government or the Government-in-Exile (copies of the letters, FO371/37206/R10450). Leeper's proposal, in his telegram 298, 6 October, and the comments of the Foreign Office and Eden, 37205/R9785. It would appear that Damaskinos did not propose the return of Plastiras; this was probably an idea originating in Cairo.

[50]SOE had suggested arranging his escape to use him in Greek affairs for some time, usually arousing Foreign Office opposition. Sargent commented at a Foreign Office/SOE meeting, 9 March 1943, to the effect that Britain could never have anything to do with Plastiras (FO371/37194/R2369). See the detailed background study of Plastiras by SOE Cairo and the resulting Foreign Office/Athens Embassy correspondence of June/July 1943 (37197/R5657 and R5671, and 37198/R7321). In the summer of 1943, Tsouderos began a series of messages to Plastiras through an intermediary in Switzerland, using the communications facilities of Leeper and the British Legation in Berne (FO371/37197 *passim*). The Foreign Office was fully aware of this action, and saw no harm in Tsouderos efforts to obtain his support (Dixon's letter, 8 July 1943, 37197/R5657). The Foreign Office did begin to accept the possibility of using Plastiras in late September (memorandum, 20 September 1943, 37222/R8993).

The King should be prevailed upon to appoint a regency council headed by Damaskinos and including prominent Greeks in Athens, such as the Chief of Police. Once the Germans departed, this council would constitute a legal authority with which the British military could work. While it was not specifically stated in Leeper's message, it was implied that the regency council would act for the King and thus obviate any need for him to return prior to a plebiscite.

The Foreign Office staff were not enthusiastic about this scheme, doubting both Plastiras' chances of gaining control over the resistance, and the value of Damaskinos' influence. They foresaw the plan as pitting two British agencies ~~against~~ against each other in the civil war by lining up SOE and the military behind EAM, while the Foreign Office were backing Plastiras and EDES. Eden examined the proposal, but deferred any decision until he could discuss it with the British authorities in Cairo, on his way to Moscow.

Before embarking on these discussions, he spoke to the King. After the usual complaints about SOE, Gorge II claimed that some of his ministers had given him an ultimatum to either agree not to return to Greece before a plebiscite, or accept their resignation. Eden expressed surprise at this, terming it blackmail which the King could not be expected to tolerate. He advised him to tell his ministers that he could not pre-judge the conditions which might exist at liberation, when he would `take the course which would best serve his country'. After discussing the matter with Tsouderos, who was at that point opposed to the King's immediate return, Eden recommended to Churchill that

the King defer any decision. Tsouderos also recommended to Eden the plan to engineer the cooperation of Plastiras, Damaskinos, and the Government-in-Exile.[51]

Eden then submitted a proposal to the Middle East Defence Committee which more or less incorporated Leeper's plan. George II should be induced to establish a regency council under Damaskinos; Plastiras was to be brought back to head EDES and an effort was to be made to establish an agreement between the Archbishop, Plastiras, and the Government. Simultaneously, supplies to EAM were to be suspended in an attempt to stop or weaken the civil war, and the value to the military of the guerrillas was to be re-examined. The specific problem of the King's immediate return does not seem to have been discussed, although the idea of a regency council would imply some change of policy on this point. The Commander-in-Chief Middle East approved the plan, although he wanted continued guerrilla action.[52]

Leeper discussed these proposals cautiously with George II and reported that the King approved the idea of bringing together Zervas (Leeper apparently did not mention Plastiras), Damaskinos, and the Government. He was prepared to give Damaskinos authority to act on his behalf in Athens. Leeper told him that EAM was exploiting the matter of his proposed early return, but that there was no question of his

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[51]Cairo telegrams 1935 and 1943, 15 and 16 October, PREM3 211/15.

[52]Eden's telegrams 1942 and 1943, 15 and 16 October, FO371/37206/R10294 and 10295; Wilson's telegram CIC/129, 9 October, *ibid.*, R10555.

making a declaration that he would not return. Leeper specifically denied rumours that the King had heard to the effect that he would be pressed to make such a declaration, which seems misleading, if not deliberately untruthful.[53]

The apparent agreement of the Commander-in-Chief proved illusory. The implications of Eden's proposals were discussed in the Special Operations Committee of the Middle East Command for ten days. The major issue was that of breaking off relations with EAM, to which SOE Cairo and the military objected, on grounds that such an action would prevent the British Military Mission from carrying out sabotage against the Germans. The military now accepted that EAM was unlikely to undertake significant action against the Germans, but felt that any measures to withdraw support would endanger the lives of the Liaison Officers or at least prevent them from undertaking sabotage operations themselves. Leeper's only hope by 31 October was that Eden might force a change of attitude when he stopped off in Cairo as he returned from Moscow.[54]

During the wait for Eden, Leeper forwarded a report on the attacks by EAM on EDES, which generated more discussion in London. Churchill, who only three weeks before had been asking the Foreign Office to explain the difference between EAM and EDES, i.e., which was royalist and which communist,

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[53]Leeper's telegram No. 1 to Eden (then in Moscow), 20 October, *ibid.*, R10489.

[54]Leeper's letter, 31 October, FO371/37222/R11431; and the confirming letter of the same date from Wallace (now back in Cairo), FO954/11A.

reacted strongly. He demanded of the Foreign Office and SOE London proposals for starving or attacking EAM.[55]

SOE London replied with a counter-proposal which recommended that a senior British officer be sent into Greece to organise the various guerrilla groups into a national army of liberation. The King should be induced to announce that he would limit himself to representing Greece at the peace conference and would not return until after a plebiscite. If EAM would not accept these proposals, the British Liaison Officers would be withdrawn. The Foreign Office explained to Churchill that Leeper was pressing for strong action against EAM, but the Commander-in-Chief wanted to avoid a break in order to protect the Liaison Officers. Any decision would have to await Eden's return to Cairo.[56] At the same time, the Foreign Office sent Leeper a detailed set of instructions to govern his discussions with Eden. There were two main points. Every effort should be made to unite the guerrillas under Plastiras. Perhaps even more emphasis was given to the importance of weakening EAM, unless SOE could make a convincing case for that movement's indispensibility.[57]

Eden returned to Cairo on 4 November, but was engaged in Turkish matters until 7 November, when he addressed the Middle East Defence Committee. He pointed out that the continual support of EAM would result in the almost certain

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[55]Churchill's request for explanation, 16 October; his demand for proposals, 3 November; Leeper's telegram 335, 2 November, PREM3 211/6.

[56]Minutes, 4 November, *loc. cit.*
[57]Telegram 241, 4 November, *loc. cit.*

resignation of the Government-in-Exile; it would assist a group of extremists who intended a coup d'etat against the wishes of the Greek people; and, if EAM succeeded, the result would be a Greece which would look to Russia, not Britain, after the war. This seemed to convince the Committee that a break with EAM was required, an action which could only be accomplished by propaganda, which would of necessity involve the issue of the King's return. Eden and the Committee agreed that unless EAM influence was broken the monarchy was doomed; the only way to break this influence was to persuade the King to promise to delay his return until the will of the Greek people wes determined. The best method of safe-guarding the King's interest while awaiting such a determination would be the establishment of a regency council.[58]

Leeper, in reporting Eden's visit to Cairo, seems to have misjudged the new attitude of the Foreign Office towards the King. He wrote to Sargent prior to Eden's return to London making it clear that although he had originally felt that the King should return at liberation, and had held this view as the official position, he had begun to change his mind. He now had to admit that he had accepted, as a new policy, that the King should declare his willingness to remain abroad until a plebiscite could be held. He feared that Sargent would not agree with what would seem to be *a volte-face*. His protestations of

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[58]Telegram GRAND 102, 19 November, FO800/410; Middle East Defence Committee minutes, 7 November, WP(43)572, 17 November, FO371/43680/R3107; *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey*, ed. John Harvey (London: Collins, 1978), p. 320.

innocence, which are not in keeping with his attitude towards the King since early August, were unnecessary; Sargent replied that he now agreed with the idea of a new declaration by the King.[55]

Probably at the instigation of Eden, a new policy statement was prepared by the Foreign Office and forwarded to the War Cabinet on 14 November. This document centred on the need to break with, or weaken, EAM, on grounds that failure to do so would lead to the resignation of the Government-in-Exile, and might well result in the establishment at liberation of a minority dictatorship. The latter would not only be a disservice to the Greek people, but could be against Britain's interest since such a dictatorship would naturally look to Russia rather than Britain in the post-war world.

It was therefore necessary to take action against EAM. Mere withdrawal of money and supplies would be of little value since EAM already had sufficient arms to make themselves independent. Reliance would have to be placed mainly on propaganda to unite moderate opinion and to win over moderate elements within EAM. But, a propaganda campaign could not avoid raising the issue of the King. If the EAM could insinuate that Britain intended to `reimpose the King at the point of British bayonets', they would retain and increase the support they already had. The influence of the EAM could be broken only if the King gave a pledge not to

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[55]Leeper's letter, 9 November, and Sargent's reply, 1 December, FO371/37208/R12219.

return to Greece until the constitutional issue had been settled either by a plebiscite or by a constituent assembly. The Foreign Office therefore recommended that an anti-EAM propaganda campaign be initiated, and the King be asked to make a declaration that a regency council would be nominated at the moment of liberation, but that he would not return until the constitutional issue had been settled.[60]

This paper was debated in the War Cabinet on 16 November, with Attlee in the chair, since Churchill was already on his way to Cairo by sea. While the Minister of Economic Warfare (Selborne), representing the SOE viewpoint, was willing to agree to the plan provided the military consequences were acceptable, the Chief of the Imperial Staff (Brooke) was not. He had no objection to Damaskinos and the regency council, but felt that the breach with EAM could not be supported. He was asking the Commander-in-Chief Middle East for his latest appreciation. There was general agreement that the break with EAM could not be undertaken unless the King made the required

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[60] WP(43)518, FO371/37222/R11828. The proposal to bring Plastiras out of France was not included, despite the fact that SOE had already begun an operation to accomplish the escape, with the knowledge and approval of the Foreign Office and the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East (Foreign Office minute, 8 October, 37205/R9785; Wilson's telegram CIC/129, 9 October, 37206/R10555; SOE letter Dixon, 10 October, 37200/R10074; and the series of telegrams of the Berne Legation, Leeper and the Foreign Office, in 37200, *passim*. Rose of the Foreign Office minuted on 23 October, 'We want General Plastiras more than ever now in view of the Secretary of State's proposal to the Middle East Defence Committee.' (37200/R10219) Despite all the activity and hope, the proposal to bring Plastiras back seems to have been shelved until the following autumn.

declaration. A decision was deferred, pending receipt of the new appreciation from the Middle East.[61]

Whether as a result of the Chiefs of Staff request for a new appreciation, or on his own initiative, Leeper on 18 November discussed the problem with Wilson. In Leeper's words to Eden: `I put to the Commander-in-Chief the following plan which I worked out after you left Cairo', although there seems no aspect of this plan which differs from Eden's proposal to the War Cabinet. Leeper reported Wilson's first reaction as favourable, which was confirmed by the Commander-in-Chief's new appreciation forwarded to London the following day. The Chiefs of Staff agreed to support Wilson's position, apparently accepting Eden's proposal.[62]

Eden reported his discussion with the Middle East Defence Committee and the indecisive War Cabinet meeting of 16 November to Churchill, stating that he intended to ask the Cabinet for permission for Churchill or himself to approach the King and ask for the desired declaration. He suggested that this should not be as difficult as it might seem since there were some indications that the King was moving towards the desired position. The basis for Eden's

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[61] WM(43)155, CAB65/36; and Eden's telegram GRAND 102, 19 November 1943, FO800/410. Cadogan, in *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, ed. David Dilks (London: Cassell, 1971), p. 575, puts it that `A. (Eden) didn't get it all his own way, and I think I'm right. I'm doubtful about a complete break with EAM and holding a pistol to the head of the King'.

[62] Leeper's telegram 634, 18 November, FO371/37208/R11908; C-in-C telegram CC/436, 19 November, and Howard's Foreign Office minute, 20 November, both 37209/R12642; Howard was not sure that Wilson was really in favour.

optimism was not stated, but it seems probable that he was referring to a letter written by the King to Tsouderos on 8 November. In this, the King stated that at the liberation he would examine the question of his return to Greece and, depending on his own appraisal of the military and political situation `at that happy time', he would make his decision. According to Tsouderos, this at first pleased the Greek cabinet, but they later demanded further concessions, perhaps feeling that the King was weakening in his resolve.[63]

Eden's message reached Churchill when he was already in despair over the entire situation in the Mediterranean. While on board H.M.S. Renown enroute to Cairo, he prepared a detailed analysis of the strategic position. He was especially unhappy with the fact that there were so few resources available for operations in the Balkans, since the main Allied command under Eisenhower did not include responsibility for operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. This area was assigned to the Middle East Command in Cairo, which had been drained of forces for the build-up to OVERLORD, the forthcoming invasion of France.

Churchill felt that the emphasis on OVERLORD would result in missed opportunities for action against the Germans in the Balkans in the months before May 1944. In his words, `It was an odd way to help the Russians to slow down the fight in the only theatre where anything can be done for some months.' A marginal handwritten note on the

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[63]Leeper's telegram 354, 14 November, FO371/37231/R11714; telegram GRAND 102, 19 November, FO800/410; Kirk's telegram 110, 23 November, FRUS, 1943, IV, 155-156.

covering memorandum which may be in Churchill's hand reads: `It is a missing link in the story.'[64] In this atmosphere, it is hardly surprising that Churchill was unhappy with the proposal to restrain the King. He replied to Eden: `I grieve deeply at this and prefer to wait until you come before approaching the King of Greece.'[65]

The problem was discussed again in the War Cabinet that same day, 22 November. The Chiefs of Staff representative reported that the military value of EAM was now believed to be small, basing his remarks on the Wilson appreciation. There was general agreement on the proposal, which was identified as that presented by Leeper to Wilson on 18 November as the new plan which he had worked out after Eden left Cairo. Presumably in view of Churchill's message, which Eden reported, the final conclusion was that Churchill and Eden should `deal with the matter broadly along these lines.'[66]

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[64]PREM3 136/6. The covering memorandum on 10 Downing Street stationary, dated 29 December 1943, identifies the writer and the time and place of preparation. It further states that the study was amended by the Chiefs of Staff in order to avoid giving offence to the Americans. In the 'somewhat softer' form it was the basis for Churchill's opening remarks at the first plenary meeting of the British and American Chiefs of Staff in Cairo (Text in FRUS, *Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, 1943 (hereinafter FRUS, *Cairo and Tehran*, 1943), pp. 330-334. A long extract of an early, and probably only partially amended, version is printed in Churchill, *Second World War*, V, 260-262. Details of the strategic position and the American versus British views are in Maurice Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe,' in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton University Press, 1986), and in John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy* (London: HMSO, 1956-1976), Vol. V, 105-122.

[65]Telegram FROZEN 67, 22 November 1943, FO800/411.
[66]WM(43)160th, CAB65/40.

The discussions concerning the new proposal gave rise to a point which now seems obvious, but had not previously surfaced. Laskey, in a Foreign Office minute on Leeper's report of his discussions with Wilson, warned of the dangers of ambiguity in the declaration the King was expected to make.[67] Whether Laskey recognised it or not, ambiguity was the major defect of the King's 4 July statement, and of the King's 8 November letter. For that matter, it was to be a major source of difficulty for all of the next year.

Presumably by coincidence, Lord Selborne, responsible for SOE as Minister for Economic Warfare, made the same point that evening in the War Cabinet meeting. He pointed out that Leeper proposed only to ask the King to declare that he would not return `until notified to do so by a properly constituted and representative Government on Greek soil after liberation', thus avoiding the word `plebiscite'. In Selborne's opinion, the avoidance of this word might result in robbing any declaration of its real value, `since plebiscite formed a regular feature of Greek political life'.[68] This is the first time the possible significance

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[67]Minute, 22 November, FO371/37208/R11908.

[68]WM(43)160, CAB65/40. One might question whether plebiscites did form 'a regular feature of Greek political life'. There were four plebiscites in Greece in the inter-war years (1920, 1924, 1926, 1935). Lars Bærentzen of the University of Copenhagen's Department of Modern Greek and Balkan Studies suggests in a private communication that Greeks in 1943 would best remember the two of 1920 and 1935. Since both were linked with political upheavals involving the monarchy which resulted in somewhat rigged royalist triumphs, one might question whether a plebiscite would be the most desirable precedent for the establishment of a stable post-war government. Details of the significant plebiscites are set forth in George Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 28, 32-33, 48-51.

of the actual word was noted; there seems to be a deliberate avoidance of `plebiscite´ by the King and his followers, by the Foreign Office, and by Leeper. Only SOE used the word consistently.

In informing Leeper of the War Cabinet decision, the Foreign Office did recommend that the desirability of including the word plebiscite be considered in the preparation of the King´s declaration. This was followed by another instruction to place stress on the need for an exact formula to prevent any cunning interpretation by `the King´s enemies´.[65] Unfortunately, it was to be impossible to carry out either of these instructions.

5. Summary

The visit of the delegates from the mountains was an almost unqualified failure. No advantage was taken of the opportunity to coordinate the guerrilla effort which was the main purpose of the visit. The failure of the British to agree to obtain a more definite statement from the King or to consider representation of the andartes in the Government-in-Exile led only to the first outbreak of civil war and the ending of most of the effort against the Germans. The abrupt decision to return the delegation to the mountains without further discussion was unnecessary, and is difficult to understand, except in terms of the unreasoning

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[65]Foreign Office telegrams 268 and 269, 23 November, FO371/37208/R11908.

anger of Leeper and Churchill. The excuse that the demands were too extreme is impossible to justify in view of the fact that it required participation of EAM in the government to obtain the Lebanon agreement of May 1944, and a definite commitment of the King to end the December 1944 uprising. The only positive result was the belated realisation by the British that the issue of the King was so critical that some new approach was required.

Chapter III
Confusion in Cairo
December 1943

1. The Conferences in Cairo and the New American Ambassador

For the next month, Greek policy was to be considered and, to a limited extent, decided in Cairo, while Churchill, Eden, and Roosevelt held meetings there before and after the Tehran Conference. This occurred even though British and American statesmen never got round to direct discussions of Greek problems, except for some unpleasant recriminations at the break-up of the second vist to Cairo. Both sides conferred with George II and his Prime Minister, but the British failure to establish a joint position with the Americans led to near disaster. There was to be confusion, negligence, and irresponsibility on both sides, and at all levels.

This was the first time the Americans were in a position to exert some influence on Greek affairs, except for the rather confused discussion at Quebec the previous summer. Unfortunately, they had no established policy. While the staff officers in the State Department who dealt with Greek affairs had definite views, these had not been adopted as official positions. Roosevelt took no State

Department representative with him to Cairo and Tehran,[1] relying on a group of American Ambassadors and Harry Hopkins[2] of his personal staff for diplomatic advice. The Ambassadors included John Gilbert Winant[3] (Court of St James), Averell Harriman[4] (Soviet Union), Lawrence Steinhardt (Turkey) and Alexander Kirk[5], who was Minister to Egypt and Ambassador to the Governments-in-Exile of Greece and Yugoslavia.

Kirk had maintained relations with the King and Tsouderos since the establishment of the Government-in-Exile in Cairo in March,[6] but had acted mainly as an observer. His detached attitude seems to have been based on a belief that Greek affairs were so dominated by British influence that there was no point in becoming involved.[7] Privately, he

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[1]Charles Bohlen, head of the Soviet Section in the State Department, and Frederick Reinhardt of the same section, were assigned to Roosevelt as interpreters and advisors, but neither had been involved in Greek affairs.

[2]Harry Hopkins (1890-1946), social worker and Roosevelt's administrator of major relief programmes during the Depression, special advisor and assistant to the President on Foreign Affairs, 1939-1945.

[3]J. G. Winant (1889-1947), Ambassador to London, 1941-1946.

[4]W. Averell Harriman (1891-1986), special representative of Roosevelt in London, 1941-1942; Ambassador to Russia, 1943-1946; Ambassador to London, 1946.

[5]Alexander Kirk (1888-), Minister to Egypt, 1941-1944; Ambassador to Greek and Yugoslav Governments, 1943-1944; Political Advisor to the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre, 1944-1946.

[6]Kirk was not appointed Ambassador to the Greek Government until June 1943, but his predecessor, Anthony Drexel Biddle, remained in London when Tsouderos and the Greek cabinet moved to Cairo.

[7]Kirk's telegram 1079, 5 June 1943, NARS 868.00/1238.

complained to a friend in the State Department that he had been given `no clear-cut impression of our policy--if any--towards Greece'.[8]

Kirk was replaced as Ambassador to the Greek and Yugoslav Governments during the Cairo Conference by Lincoln MacVeagh[9], who had been the American Minister to Greece from 1933 to 1941. MacVeagh brought with him an extensive knowledge and understanding of Greek affairs and personalities. He came to Cairo directly from South Africa, where he had been serving, so that he had had no opportunity to discuss Greek policy with the State Department.

There were no written instructions for him from Washington, except for a personal letter from Wallace Murray of the State Department. Murray pointed out that MacVeagh would find a number of documents in the Embassy files which would give him the general lines of State Department thinking on the problem of the return of the King (which seems to contradict the complaint of Kirk a few months before). Murray stated that the Department's ideas were based mainly on the advice MacVeagh had sent to Washington when he left Greece in June 1941, and repeated to him a long extract from MacVeagh's final dispatch. He added a copy of

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[8]Letter, 15 July, NARS 868.00/1301.

[9]Lincoln MacVeagh (1890-1972), member of an old New England family which included an Ambassador to Japan, a Minister to Turkey and Italy, a Secretary of the Treasury and an Attorney-General; after an early career as publisher, Minister to Greece, 1933-1941; Minister to Iceland, 1941-1942; Minister to South Africa, 1942-1943; Ambassador to the Greek Government, 1943-1948; Ambassador to Portugal, 1948-1952; Ambassador to Spain, 1952-1953.

the outdated British policy statement of October 1942, and a confusing set of papers prepared by the Department at the time of the Quebec Conference. He did mention that much of the confusion at Quebec was caused by the fact that the State Department had been unable to get its ideas to the President at the proper time. The only definite point which can be extracted from this letter is the State Department's objection to the King's return with the liberating forces.[10]

MacVeagh suffered a further disadvantage. He did not arrive in Cairo until 28 November, after both the British and American parties had left for Tehran. He therefore had no opportunity to discuss Greek affairs with Roosevelt or any member of his entourage. He was briefed once by Kirk and George V. Allen, Assistant Chief of the State Department's Division of Near Eastern Affairs (which supervised Greek relations), who was passing through Cairo on his way from Moscow to Washington. It would seem that neither of them had had any discussion with the party from Washington;

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[10]Letter, 15 November, NARS 868.00/1304A. Undoubtedly without MacVeagh's knowledge, the State Department told Roosevelt that MacVeagh would have full background on Greek problems, 'particularly the Greek King', when the President visited Cairo (FRUS, *Cairo and Tehran*, 1943, p. 129). Leeper reported to Eden on 7 December that MacVeagh had just received a letter from the State Department dated 15 November 'strongly urging our line' (FO371/37231/R13507). Assuming this is the Murray letter, it would seem that Leeper was guilty of exaggeration, since the British 'line' had not been adopted even tentatively until 22 November. However, since the critical action in Cairo took place on 6 December, Leeper's report cannot have had any significant effect, i.e., it could not have induced Eden to think that Roosevelt approved the new British policy. The suggestion that this letter was the only indication MacVeagh had of State Department policy is borne out by his diary entry of 17 December (Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 410).

nor had they any knowledge of the new British policy. The briefings by Kirk and Allen seem to have amounted to only one morning and one afternoon session, and could only have involved Greece partially, since Kirk was also turning over responsibility for Yugoslavia to MacVeagh.

2. Preparing Churchill, MacVeagh, and Roosevelt for the New British Plan.

The new American Ambassador obtained most of his up-to-date information from the Greek Prime Minister, the Minister of the Household of George II, the British Ambassador, and the British Minister of State. The latter two gave MacVeagh a thorough briefing on the new British proposal, and provided him with a detailed memorandum of it. MacVeagh told Leeper he was very favourably impressed and would support the plan if given a chance. Leeper reported that he had 'coached' MacVeagh on what he was to say to Roosevelt.[11]

Unknown to MacVeagh, the President had already injected himself into Greek affairs. He received George II and Tsouderos on the afternoon of 24 November, prior to his departure for Tehran. According to the American record, this was a short courtesy call,[12] but Leeper greeted Eden upon his return to Cairo with a different story. In his words, the President told the King he had heard that some Greeks urged him not to return at once to his country, but

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[11] Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 388-394; Leeper's letter, 4 December, FO800/276.

[12] 'Roosevelt Conversations,' FRUS, *Cairo and Tehran*, 1943, pp. 297, 345.

he strongly urged the King not to listen to them, but to go in with his troops. Eden agreed with Leeper that this was neither a timely nor a helpful suggestion, but there is no indication that Eden took any action such as warning Churchill of the President's attitude. The Foreign Office took no alarm at the news. Sargent passed Leeper's report to a colleague with the comment `This may amuse you', although it is not clear that he was referring to Roosevelt's remarks.[18]

Perhaps Eden was concentrating on a more difficult task. Churchill had not yet been completely informed as to what was to be done, having received Eden's rather general outline of the new policy only while en route to Cairo. Eden asked Leeper for a brief for his talk with the King, which he intended to discuss with the Prime Minister after the two returned from having Thanksgiving dinner with Roosevelt. At the dinner, Roosevelt volunteered an account of his conversation with the King. Churchill was amused, and suggested that Eden explain his new policy, which rather differed from that of the President. Eden apparently sidestepped, but he had had another warning that the new plan was in danger.

Desmond Morton, an aide to Churchill who specialised in relations with Governments-in-Exile, had spent the early evening helping Leeper prepare the brief Eden had requested. He was present at Churchill's villa when the Prime Minister returned from the dinner without Eden, and decided that he

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[18]Letter, 27 November, and comment, *loc. cit.*

should brief Churchill then on the Greek plan. Churchill was in an extremely cheerful mood, but was uninterested in Morton's attempts to discuss Greece or its King. Eventually, as Morton persisted in his efforts, Churchill adopted a Napoleonic attitude and composed and sang a song about the King of Greece. Morton gave up.[14]

Before the statesmen left for Tehran, Leeper gave a copy of his brief for Eden to Ambassador Winant, who seems to have been regarded as the senior diplomatic official in Roosevelt's party. He explained the significance of the plan to Winant, although he was not sure that the latter understood it.[15] At some time prior to 3 December, and probably before the move to Tehran, Eden discussed the new plan at length with Winant and Harry Hopkins, providing them with another copy of the brief. Hopkins expressed the opinion that the plan represented `the right policy' and promised to recommend it to the President.[16]

Churchill and Eden returned to Cairo on 2 December, and Eden began work on Greek affairs. He decided that he would open discussions with the King and Tsouderos on his own, and asked Leeper to obtain Churchill's permission for this

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[14]*Loc. cit.* The Thanksgiving dinner has been described as being rather exuberant, with Churchill dancing with Roosevelt's rather portly and elderly aide, General Watson (Churchill, *The Second World War*, V, 268-269; Pawle, *The War and Colonel Warden* (London: Harrap, 1963), p. 267). Kirk was present at the dinner, but apparently did not mention the conversation concerning the King to MacVeagh.

[15]Letter, 27 November, FO800/276.

[16]Morton to Churchill, 2 December, and Eden to Churchill, 7 December, PREM3 211/15; Hopkins' copy of the brief in FRUS, *Cairo and Tehran*, 1943, pp. 850-852.

procedure. This may indicate simply that Eden had no opportunity to ask Churchill personally, or that Eden hesitated to bring up a topic for which the Prime Minister had no enthusiasm. Leeper used Morton to obtain a note from Churchill saying `I agree, but with regret´. The next day Eden saw George II and gave him a copy of the brief to read (but not to keep). It would appear that Eden did not attempt to explain the significance of the document. The King made no comment, and Eden and Leeper assumed that his failure to object to the new plan was a favourable sign.

Leeper also let Tsouderos read a copy of the brief. While Tsouderos approved the new plan, he was very surprised that the King had not mentioned it when telling him of Eden´s visit. Tsouderos immediately went to the King to learn that the latter had only glanced at the brief and had not understood its import. After some rather agitated disucssion the King calmed down and seemed to accept the proposal, subject only to the reservation that he must discuss it with Churchill before making his final decision.[17] Leeper reported this to Eden who passed it to Churchill in a note on 5 December. Churchill commented in writing `Let us talk this over´, but there is no record of such a discussion before 7 December.[18]

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[17]Leeper´s letter, 4 December, and Eden´s minute, 5 December, FO371/37231/R12837.

[18]Leeper´s letter, 4 December, FO800/276.

3. The King's Visit to Roosevelt

The King visited Roosevelt on 6 December, before seeing Churchill. The only records of this meeting are second-hand versions originating with the King, and an account written six weeks later by the President, which was not, so far as is known, revealed to British authorities. Tsouderos, reporting what the King told him of the meeting, stated that Roosevelt himself had raised the question of the King's return. Roosevelt is supposed to have said that the war was not yet over and it would be a great mistake for the King to make the proposed declaration. He promised to discuss the matter with Churchill on his way to the airport when he left Cairo. Tsouderos felt that the King would have agreed to make the declaration with the slightest encouragement from Roosevelt, but that Churchill might still persuade him.[15]

Field Marshall Smuts, who had a long acquaintanceship with George II, saw the King the same day. Smuts gave Leeper an account similar to that of Tsouderos, adding that the King accused the British of trying to get rid of him,

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[15]Leeper's minute to Eden, 7 December, FO371/37231/R12837. Eden that same day noted on the margin that someone (name or title illegible) had already told him of the meeting. According to his informant, the King had said that the British were blackmailing him into resigning his crown. Eden continued: 'But this may only be the President's gloss!' which may mean that Eden received his information from Hopkins or some other American source.

and that Roosevelt had stated that he had not been consulted by the British on this change of policy.[20]

Eden arrived at Roosevelt's villa while the King and the president were still talking, to be told by Hopkins that `British policy was not going well'. When the President emerged from his talk with the King, he told Eden he was not happy with the way the Foreign Secretary was treating the King. The next morning Roosevelt, on his way to the airport, told Churchill with some vehemence that Eden was trying to deprive George II of his crown.[21] In reporting the Cairo and Tehran meetings to senior British ministers two weeks later, Eden stated that the President opened the discussion with the King by saying `Don't let anybody bully you into giving an undertaking not to go back to your

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[20]Leeper's minute to Eden, 7 December, PREM3 211/15 (there are two Leeper minutes to Eden dated 7 December). In Leeper's account to the Foreign Office of the King's meetings with the President and Smuts, he indicates that Smuts assured the King that the British were still his friends, but that Smuts feared that the King might abdicate (FO371/37231/R12837). Some weeks later, Leeper suggested that Smuts' attitude at this meeting with the King was almost as much to blame for the King's refusal as was Roosevelt's (Leeper's letter to Eden, 24 January 1944, FO371/43677/R1860). While Smuts was certainly a strong supporter of the Greek Royal Family, and had opposed a Greek plebisicite at the time of Quebec (*supra*, p. 60), there is no other evidence of any interference by Smuts at Cairo. The Foreign Office refused to circulate Leeper's letter (intended by Leeper to be his formal report on his activities since 1 July 1943) to the Dominions, partially because of this comment on Smuts.

[21]Eden, *The Reckoning* (London: Cassell, 1965), pp. 498-499. It is not understood how Hopkins knew British policy was not going well, unless Hopkins had been in the President's room and left temporarily, .

country. I am sure they will all be only too delighted to see you again.'[22]

Roosevelt gave his version of the conversation in a letter to MacVeagh on 15 January 1944, but limited it to the point that George II felt he was being `blackmailed´ by the British. In the same letter he revealed a considerable naivete concerning Greek politics and institutions. He recommended a constitutional monarch having no political powers whatsoever, an elected Prime Minister with a fixed term, and limitations on the number of political parties, a set of proposals which shed considerable light on how ill-prepared he was to comment on the British plan.[23]

Churchill and Eden did discuss the problem of the Greek King on 7 December, in the light of Leeper´s report on Smuts´ conversation with the King, and, presumably, the version provided by Tsouderos.[24] Shortly afterward they entertained the King at luncheon, but the only record of the

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[22]*The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton*, ed. Ben Pimlott (London: Cape, 1985), entry for 21 December 1943, p. 686. Sir David Hunt in a private communication relates a story emanating from Cairo at the time to the effect that what Roosevelt actually said was closer to: ´You don´t want to listen to that ____ Winston and Anthony have been giving you; you just get on your white horse and ride into Athens at the head of your troops and everyone will cheer.´ The original source of this was Colonel Levidis, the Master of Ceremonies of the Greek Royal Household, who claimed to have been present. (The official record of the meeting of Roosevelt and the King do not show either Hopkins or Levidis as being present (FRUS, *Cairo and Tehran*, 1943, pp. 660, 740).) While one may not be sure of the actual words, the sense is completely consistent with Eden´s remarks to the British ministers; Eden would probably not have reflected Roosevelt´s opinion of the merit of the British proposal.

[23]Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 444-445.
[24]Eden´s minute, 7 December, PREM3 211/15

conversation which has been located is a brief but unclear account by Eden, which indicates that the King refused to promise to postpone his return until a plebiscite could be held.[25] According to a report reaching MacVeagh, Churchill told the King at this meeting, `I am a Royalist´,[26] which was in itself probably enough to encourage George II to refuse the request in any case.

The words of Roosevelt to the King, whatever they were, were criticised as `irresponsible´ (Eden),[27] `frustrating´ (Eden),[28] `sabotage´ (Eden),[29] `selling the pass´ (Cadogan),[30] `devious´ (David Hunt),[31] `annoying´ (Sargent),[32] `astonishing´ (Leeper),[33] and `shocking´ (Oliver Harvey).[34] Eden and the Foreign Office ever after stressed that the President had ruined the entire plan; without a firm and definite statement by the King, there was

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[25]Eden, *The Reckoning*, p. 499; to an extent confirmed by Eden´s telegram of 17 August 1944, PREM 212/1.

[26]FRUS, 1943, IV, 160.

[27]*The Reckoning*, p. 498. This is Eden´s first published comment. C. M. Woodhouse, *Struggle for Greece*, p. 295, points out that Eden asked him to omit mention of Roosevelt´s actions in this matter when Woodhouse was writing *The Apple of Discord* in 1948.

[28]Telegram, 17 August 1944, PREM3 212/1

[29]Note, 3 January 1944, FO371/37210/R13964.

[30]*Diaries*, p.585.

[31]´Performing Fleas,´ *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 February 1983.

[32]Minute, 8 December 1943, FO371/37231/R12837.

[33]*When Greek Meets Greek*, p. 35.

[34]*Diaries*, pp. 324-325.

no possibility that EAM's influence could be reduced.[35] The proposal for a regency council, upon which so much weight had been placed, could not be implemented without the King's signature. In the event it would be another year, and another civil war in Greece, before George II would agree to any sort of Regency.

Whether the new plan, even if put into effect in its entirety, could have solved the problem of Greece is debatable, but the question does arise as to why the President acted in such a contrary and inexplicable manner. The late Elisabeth Barker has suggested that Roosevelt's support for the King was due to an inordinate respect for monarchs; she felt he collected kings in the same way he collected stamps.[36] It is more likely that he saw himself as the equal of kings and queens, if not somewhat superior, in that he was both head of state and head of government. Churchill may have had his `King mania'; Roosevelt did not.

From what little is known of Roosevelt's actual views on Greek politics, it is suggested that he had only a vague under-standing and little interest. His reaction to Churchill's presentation of the Greek problem at Quebec, *supra*, pp. 56-57, seems at best an acceptance of Churchill's wishes without much thought to its significance. In the previous October, he had remarked in public to the Greek

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[35]In reporting the discussions with the King to the War Cabinet on 13 December, Eden was restrained; he only expressed the fear that the President's intervention would have a very injurious effect on the general plan (WM(43)169th, CAB65/40).

[36]*Churchill and Eden at War* (London: Macmillan, 1976), p. 188.

Ambassador, `After all, King George has the right to return to Greece as Commander-in-Chief of his army.´[37] This suggests that he was aware of the British policy existing at that time, but that he did not agree with, probably did not know, the State Department´s view. He may have been relying only on his memory of Quebec.[38]

Some effort had been made by the British to inform Roosevelt of the new policy, but it is doubtful that its exact details and justification ever reached him. Leeper explained it to Winant and Eden discussed it with both Winant and Hopkins, but there is no evidence that either of the two brought it to Roosevelt´s attention. MacVeagh, in his diary, gives the impression that he explained the plan to the President, but a careful reading creates doubts. He probably provided the historical background and the current situation in Greece, but it would appear that he made no detailed explantion of the British plan of action or of its purposes.

MacVeagh did leave with the President a short, but clear, memorandum, with a copy of Leeper´s brief attached. This began: `Firstly, it should be made absolutely clear

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[37]Memorandum of 13 October, referring to a meeting on the previous day, NARS 868.01/412.

[38]Cordell Hull later told MacVeagh that Roosevelt, before he went to Cairo, had refused to admit that ´everything that is being done´ regarding Greece and the Middle East in general is "British policy"´, but afterwards he was fully convinced (conversation, 15 August 1944, Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 581). This does not seem in keeping with other evidence and may reflect Hull´s lack of understanding of the Middle East situation.

that the King is not going to be forced on the country against its will . . .' It continued:

> . . . the so-called Communist forces at present making so much trouble in the country are spreading the charge that the Allies intend to force the King back on Greece in their own interests. This is a tremendous propaganda weapon ~~because~~ because of the independent spirit of the Greeks. The British proposal that the King declare now that he will not return until asked to do so by the Greek people themselves is, therefore, a good one. It would deprive subversive elements of their chief appeal to the Greek people. It would also be in the King's own interest, tending to strengthen his cause, which has been inevitably weakened by his association with the Metaxas dictatorship and his own subsequent absence from the country. But only a declaration by him can fill the bill in view of the widespread distrust of the Allies in this matter which has been sown in Greece.[39]

It will be noted that MacVeagh did not draw attention to the importance of the proposed regency council, or to the proposals to integrate resistance forces into the Greek army, two facets of the plan considered essential to its potential success.

It is not difficult to believe that Roosevelt never got round to reading MacVeagh's memorandum or Leeper's brief.[40] He may have retained nothing from the conversation with his ambassador except that the British intended to prevent the

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[39]Carbon copy headed 'MEMORANDUM (Left by Mr McVeagh [sic] with the President)', and dated 3 December 1943, in FO371/37231/R13507. No copy has been found in American files.

[40]Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, Vol. III, 401, n. 1, states that 'The President himself had seen the British proposals before they were submitted to the King' and therefore Roosevelt's complaint that he had not been consulted was contrary to the facts. Woodward provides no source for the implication that the President had actually read and understood the British plan.

return of the King. In other words, he did not really recognise that he was being informed of a major change in British policy. In his conversation MacVeagh seems to have stressed that the United States should not be involved in an attempt `to force any regime whatsoever on the Greeks.[41] This emphasis may well have reinforced Roosevelt's refusal to support the British proposal.

Even if MacVeagh did make the new plan clear, George II may have convinced Roosevelt that MacVeagh was in league with the British. The American Ambassador had seen the King after speaking to the President, but before the King saw Roosevelt. MacVeagh's record creates the impression that he urged the King to go along with the Foreign Office plan. He did make it clear that this was a personal, not an official, piece of advice, and that he did not want to interfere in Greek internal affairs. His description of his conversation is clear, logical, and convincing, and it should be remembered that MacVeagh was probably better acquainted with George II than any other non-Greek person involved.[42]

MacVeagh must have been unpleasantly surprised shortly after Roosevelt left Cairo, when he received what amounted to a reprimand from the President. This was delivered by Winant, to whom it had been whispered by Roosevelt as the latter prepared to board his aircraft, and shortly after the President complained to Churchill concerning Eden's attitude towards the King. According to Winant, Roosevelt forbade MacVeagh to associate himself `with any attempt to force the

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[41]Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 396-397.
[42]*Ibid.*, pp. 399-400.

King's decision against his will'. Further, the President felt that MacVeagh had already `gone too far in this direction'. Not surprisingly, MacVeagh wondered what the King had said to Roosevelt.[43]

MacVeagh sent Roosevelt a detailed defence of his actions, which stressed that he had made it clear to the King that the United States did not wish to interfere in Greek internal affairs. In his *apologia* MacVeagh admitted that he had told the King the British plan was a very good one, but had emphasised that the King should make up his own mind. Roosevelt replied, saying that he fully understood the matter, and only wanted MacVeagh to know that the King felt he was `being "railroaded" or "blackmailed" by the British'.[44]

While MacVeagh's first reaction to Winant's message from the President was that the King had complained that MacVeagh was giving too much support to the British, he later came to the conclusion that it was not the King, but the British who had brought the Presidential wrath down upon him. He felt that they had overemphasised his approval of the plan, and thus given Roosevelt the wrong impression of his attitude.[45] Whether MacVeagh had specific evidence of this or not, it was true that Leeper had told Eden that the American Ambassador was entirely in favour of the proposal,

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[43] Diary, 8 December, *ibid.*, pp. 406-408.

[44] MacVeagh's letter, 13 December; Roosevelt's reply, 15 January 1944, *ibid.*, pp. 406-408, 444-445.

[45] Diary, 17 December, *ibid.*, p. 409.

and Eden had emphasised this idea to Churchill.[46] While logical, it is difficult to see how the British could have communicated this impression to Roosevelt, since they apparently did not discuss Greek affairs with the President until the journey to the airfield.

MacVeagh can hardly be blamed for the failure of the grand design, or of disloyalty to American policy. He did favour the British plan, although there seems no reason to believe that he was unduly influenced by Leeper or Casey; he seems to have judged it on its merits, based on his long-term knowledge of Greek politics. He had received next to nothing in the way of official instructions, either from the State Department[47] or from his predecessor. All that he knew of United States policy was that contained in the letter from Murray, which stressed the belief that the King's return was undesirable, at least until the will of the Greek people was known.[48] Although he was an old

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[46]Note, 5 December, FO371/37231/R12837; and Eden to Churchill, 5 December, PREM3 211/15.

[47]MacVeagh's report of his own conversations with the President, and the meetings of the King with Roosevelt, and with Churchill and Eden, puzzled the State Department, who took the report to indicate a major change in British policy on Greece. MacVeagh had his staff prepare a more detailed analysis, which ignored Roosevelt's interference, but emphasised that the British were not turning their backs on the King, but trying to preserve his position. It is obvious from the State Department's enquiry to MacVeagh that neither Roosevelt nor his personal staff informed the State Department of their involvement in Greek affairs at Cairo (FRUS, 1943, IV, 157-160; and Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 413-414).

[48]As late as 17 December, MacVeagh confided to his diary that the only guidance he possessed with regard to Greece was Murray's letter concerning the King's return (Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 410).

personal friend of the President, he had no knowledge of Roosevelt's views, even after his talk with him in Cairo. Roosevelt was a difficult man to brief, particularly if he had pre-conceived ideas or wished to avoid making an immediate decision. Under these circumstances, it is easy to accept that MacVeagh was unable to impress upon the President the real significance of the British plan.

4. Roosevelt's Motivations

In attempting to explain Roosevelt's attitude on 6 December the following possible factors may be considered:

First, for unexplained reasons, he arrived in Cairo believing that the King should return with his troops.

Secondly, he was unhappy with the decision forced on him the previous day to abandon Operation BUCCANEER, the invasion of the Andaman Islands in Southeast Asia.

Thirdly, he was irritated because he had not been properly informed of the British plan. He may have felt that the British themselves should have explained it to him, rather than leaving it to the newly arrived American Ambassador.

Finally, much of what he did understand of the new plan was probably what George II told him, and it is difficult to believe that the King gave him the most accurate account of its advantages, if indeed the King understood what it was intended to accomplish.

In these circumstances, it is easy to imagine that Roosevelt reacted to George II's complaints about his treatment by the British by telling the King to stand up for his rights. This suggestion is buttressed by Roosevelt's warning to MacVeagh through Winant against associating himself too closely with British plans for the King, and by

his complaints to Eden concerning his conduct towards the monarch.

5. British Responsibility

If Roosevelt's advice to the King was critical of the entire British policy for Greece, as Eden later intimated, the British had only themselves to blame for his unfavourable action. Had Churchill wholeheartedly supported the plan, if Eden had personally convinced Churchill of its necessity, and if the two of them had discussed it with Roosevelt before he saw the King, there is a good chance that he would have gone along with it. Unfortunately Eden left the briefing of Roosevelt to Winant and Hopkins, who, probably, paid little attention to its importance and never took it up with the President.

In hindsight, it seems evident that the only person who had a reasonable chance of explaining the new proposal to Roosevelt and obtaining his support was Churchill. But, Churchill had accepted the plan with regret when it was put to him at Malta, and the one attempt to discuss it with him personally, that of Morton prior to Tehran, was an obvious failure. There is no evidence that Eden discussed the plan with Churchill prior to Roosevelt's second meeting with the King; he did provide him with briefing notes, and a written account of his own talks with the King, but, so far as can be determined, he never warned the Prime Minister of Roosevelt's probable atttiude. There is no reason to

suppose that Eden ever asked Churchill to discuss the matter with Roosevelt.

Churchill and Eden had been in constant touch for the previous twelve days. Surely, Eden could have discussed the matter and encouraged Churchill to intercede with the President. Churchill should have been able to find an opportunity to explain the matter to Roosevelt. Logical as this may seem, it is probably true that the pressure of other affairs during the first meeting of the three heads of government made it almost impossible for Eden to use any influence on Churchill concerning the Greek plan, particularly when it was evident that it was unpopular with the Prime Minister. Perhaps Churchill was not too displeased to find that the President was supporting what may still have been his own desires with regard to the King.

There is the possibility that Eden was not entirely convinced that the new plan was necessary; therefore he may have lacked the determination to ensure its adoption. MacVeagh mentions a report that Eden was only persuaded to accept the proposal with difficulty.[45] This does not seem to be in keeping with Eden's discussion in Cairo in October, or in the War Cabinet in November, but it is not entirely far-fetched.

However, did the failure of this plan amount to such a tragic defeat? Would the King have made the appropriate declaration even if urged by Roosevelt? His record of making declarations both before and after this incident

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[45]FRUS, 1943, IV, 159; Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 413.

shows a continuous refusal to make definite committments. Even though the King refused to agree to the new plan, he did issue a new statement a few days later, which satisfied no one. He eventually gave in on an immediate return to Greece, but he would not approve a regency, despite constant efforts by the British, strongly supported by the State Department. Even after their dramatic visit to Athens in the midst of the fighting in December 1944, Churchill and Eden had a monumental task in forcing the King to appoint Damaskinos Regent, and to agree without reservation not to return to Greece until a plebiscite could be held.

Further, would the King's definite agreement to these points in December 1943 have solved the British problems, prevented civil war, and permitted the establishment of moderate democratic government? It is true that EAM made the issue of the King their major propaganda theme, but would they have given up any attempt to seize power in Greece if this issue not longer existed? Surely, they would have found another issue. Their support might have been somewhat less without the question of the King, but it certainly was not the only political issue available to them.

Nevertheless, the plan of November 1943 was to all intents and purposes the action taken at the end of December 1944. The King finally made a definite promise not to return before a plebiscite and appointed Damaskinos Regent. This was the essential stipulation which made the Varkiza agreement between EAM and the Greek Government possible. True, EAM may have stressed the issue of the King only as a

face-saving device to cover up their defeat by `British bayonets', but one cannot ignore another possibility. Full and public support by Roosevelt for the proposal, ideally coupled with American participation in the liberation, might have put EAM in the awkward position of having to oppose both the United States and Great Britain. Such a situation might have changed the decision to begin the `Second Round' in December 1944.

Roosevelt, to say the least, was irresponsible in interfering without making an effort to understand the new British policy. His action was all the more reprehensible in view of the American refusal to take any interest in or to feel any obligation to Greece during the war years.

Chapter IV

Indecisive Planning, December 1943-October 1944

1. The King's Letter of 8 November 1943

At the end of the Second Cairo Conference, Tsouderos and the British were left with the task of picking up the pieces. The first action was taken by the Greek Prime Minister, apparently without British prompting or knowledge. On 10 December 1943, he told Churchill that he had persuaded the King to make a back-dated modification to his letter of 8 November, which amounted to agreeing that when he did make his decision concerning his return to Greece, he would do so 'in agreement with my Government'. The addition of these few words seem to have been taken by Tsouderos and the British as a major improvement, although it is difficult to see why. It hardly amounted to obtaining approval by the Greek people, given that the Government-in-Exile was not truly representative.[1]

Despite this weakness, the 8 November letter, along with the 4 July 1943 declaration, were to be the keynotes of British attempts to prove that the King would not be forced upon the Greeks. The letter, heretofore confidential, was

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[1]Leeper's telegrams 382-386, 11-12 December 1943, FO371/37231/R13070, R13091, R13092, and R13093; MacVeagh's telegram 130, 14 December, NARS 868.01/417.

published and widely distributed in an effort to reduce support for EAM in Greece.

There was a question as to what the King intended to take up with his Government. The version which the King signed spoke of `examining the question of the date of my return´, while the published version was limited to `examining the date of my return´. This change, alleged by one source to be a deliberate action of a Minister of the Greek Government, could be taken as a promise not to return unless the situation seemed favourable, or even a promise not to return before a plebiscite; the original version might limit the King only to taking advice as to just when he should return, e.g., at liberation or some time later.[2]

The King pointed out to MacVeagh that he did not consider the letter to be a new declaration, and insisted that MacVeagh notify Roosevelt that he was not violating the advice the President had given him in Cairo. According to the King, the promise to consult his Government concerning his return did not constitute any change in his position, since he would naturally consult `his own appointed ministers´ when making an important decision.[3] Leeper and MacVeagh agreed that the new statement put the King in the hands of the republican members of the Cabinet, which in their view meant that the King would probably never return

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[2]Lee, *Royal House of Greece*, p. 167. Woodhouse, *Struggle for Greece*, p. 73, states that the omission of the three words led many Greeks to believe that the King had agreed not to return without a plebiscite; see comments by Leeper and the Foreign Office in FO371/43728/R1110, and by Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries* (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 538.

[3]Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 414.

to Greece;[4] it is possible that the King hoped to replace his opposition ministers with royalists.

Tsouderos also managed to persuade the King to agree that Damaskinos should represent the Government-in-Exile in Athens. With this and the modified letter as a basis, Tsouderos and Leeper prepared a new plan, which relied to a considerable extent on the expectation that Damaskinos would be able to rally moderate Greek political leaders to the side of the Cairo Government and the King. A second element of the plan was an appeal to Zervas and Sarafis, the military leader of EAM, to conclude an armistice and separation of forces, to be followed by an arrangement to unify all the resistance elements under the control of the British Commander-in-Chief. Groups which suppported this proposal would be provided with arms and supplies. In order to press EAM to accept or to put them in an unfavourable light if they refused, there would first be an attempt to obtain the agreement of the United States and the Soviet Union to issue a joint appeal to the resistance groups to accept the call for unity.[5]

Tsouderos made an appeal to the guerrillas for unity in a radio broadcast on 21 December 1943. The following day the British Embassy in Washington presented details of their plan to the State Department. The Americans supported the Tsouderos appeal and provided a message to the Greek Prime

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[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 405-406.
[5] Summary of piecemeal proposals from Cairo as modified by the Foreign Office, FO371/37209/R13126, R13128, and R13188.

Minister for publication. This was broadcast by the Greeks on 31 December, along with a similar message from the British Government.[6]

It was not so easy to obtain a statement from the Soviets. Eden sent two messages to Molotov through the British Charge d´Affaires urging a similar Soviet message, but was rebuffed; according to the Soviet Ambassador in Cairo, because the Kremlin had `no information as to internal Greek affairs, they did not consider it appropriate for the Soviet Union to become involved with them´. Tsouderos, in his New Year´s Eve broadcast, had to manage with expressing the hope that other Allied Governments would follow the example of the British and the Americans.

After the British notes had been delivered in vain, Harriman, the American Ambassador in Moscow, told Molotov of Hull´s message to Tsouderos. Within two days, Moscow radio broadcast a call to Greece for `guerrillas and citizens´ to unite for `the final stuggle against the Germans and for the independence and freedom of the Greek people´. Harriman inferred that his intervention had succeeded where the British had failed. Molotov followed with an indication that he would support the Allied effort and a Soviet statement was given to the Government-in-Exile for publication.[7] If Harriman´s talk with Molotov was the decisive factor in producing a Soviet statement, it was not because of a strong State Department desire to assist the British or

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[6]FO371/43677/R1860; FRUS, 1943, IV, 160-166.

[7]Harriman´s telegrams, 3 and 5 January 1944, FRUS, 1943, IV, 165-166; FO371/37210/R13709 and 43714/R273.

to try to solve the Greek problem. The American Ambassador had already reported to Washington that the British and Greek Ambassadors in Moscow had informed him of their vain efforts, and added that he had had no instructions on the matter from Washington.[8]

While these messages from the three major powers do not seem more than high-blown sentiments, they are credited by Woodhouse, who was by then the senior British Liaison Officer in Greece, with having had a major effect in bringing about his success in arranging the truce between the warring guerrilla factions signed at the [redacted] Plaka bridge in late February 1944.[9]

2. The King's Refusal to Make a New Declaration.

Leeper and Tsouderos hoped that the amended letter of 8 November would placate the opposition, at least among the politicians, but their optimism soon evaporated. The Government-in-Exile sent an emissary to Damaskinos in Athens to tell him that the King would appoint him as his representative in Greece, with powers to act when the Germans left. In the meantime, Damaskinos should try to establish an understanding with the Greek political leaders in Athens. The Archbishop accepted this role and notified Tsouderos that he had obtained a joint statement from several leading figures that they were satisfied with the

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[8]Harriman's telegram, 26 December 1943, FRUS, 1943, IV, 164-165, and n. 2; FO371/43675/R602.

[9]*Struggle for Greece*, p. 65.

amended 8 November declaration. They would be willing to work with the Cairo government, provided that it was broadened to take in a wide range of political views, including those of the movements in Greece.[10]

Damaskinos and the politicians changed their attitudes when in early March 1944 ,a courier arrived from Athens demanding that the King immediately sign a secret constitutional act appointing Damaskinos Regent until a plebiscite could be held. This was represented as the agreed views of all parties including the socialists and the communists, although the latter two groups added some other demands.[11] At the same time, Greek factional leaders in Cairo demanded an amendment to the King's letter which would stipulate that the monarch would not go back to Greece before a plebiscite could be held.[12]

Tsouderos responded by proposing to write to the King (now in London) demanding his signature on the proposed constitutional act and his agreement to the broadening of the government by the inclusion of representatives of all other parties.[13] Churchill learned of the proposal and

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[10]Leeper's telegram 52, 53, and 63, 27 and 29 January 1944, and letter, 15 January, FO371/43676/R1440, R1441, and R1485; his letters, 4 and 25 February, 43678/R2276 and 43680/R3104.

[11]Leeper's telegrams 96 and 146, 11 February and 7 March, FO371/43678/R2263 and 43681/R3700; Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 464, 472-475.

[12]Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 464; Leeper's letter, 4 February, and telegram 96, 11 February, FO371/43678/R2263 and R2276.

[13]Leeper's telegrams 146-149, 7-9 March, FO371/43681/R3700, R3770, and R3810.

wrote to Eden that the King should not be pressed to sign; he should stand on the 8 November letter. Eden's note to his staff was, `This is the reaction I expected. But, we need not necessarily abandon the project--we can always return to the charge.'[14]

Before any indication of the British attitude could reach Tsouderos, he had written to the King. The latter immediately refused to consent to the idea of a regency under Damaskinos, although he would consider some widening of the political spectrum of the Government.[15] While the King's attitude towards Damaskinos seemed adamant, Tsouderos and Leeper appealed to London for pressure on the King to change his mind. Eden sent a long memorandum to Churchill in which he pointed out that Tsouderos' proposal was, `in effect, what we asked the King to do last November' (presumably referring to the discussion in Cairo on 7 December). He quoted from a message to Leeper to the effect that there was now convincing evidence that all leading politicians in Greece were agreed on the necessity for the King to delay his return.

Eden felt that the British Government could not advise the King to reject the appeal, but should take the line that he must make his own decision in consultation with his government. In Eden's view the King at Cairo was offered a

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[14]Eden's minute, 10 March; Churchill's note, 11 March and Eden's comments, FO371/43681/R3810.

[15]Leeper's telegram 154, 13 March, PREM3 211/11; Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 464, 466, 468-9, 472-475; and FRUS, 1944, V, 87-89.

reward, the promise to break off relations with EAM and to incorporate the guerrillas into the Greek regular forces. Now that Britain had abandoned these two proposals, there would be `no sure advantages´ to the King in acceding to Tsouderos´ request.[16]

Eden´s comments are contradictory. He seems to have forgotten that the so-called `reward´ had been abandoned almost entirely because of the King´s refusal to make the desired statement in December. Perhaps there would be `no sure advantages to the King´ in terms of immediate actions, but the attempt to establish a regency and a broader coalition government appears to have been the best plan available if the King were to have any hope in regaining his throne, and if the British were to ~~estalish~~ establish a free and friendly post-war Greece. Therefore, Eden´s refusal to exert pressure on the King to sign the constitutional act was in the interest of neither the King nor of Britain. Perhaps he was going against his own views becasue he knew Churchill would be annoyed with the thought of putting pressure on the King again, but it seems more likely that Eden shared Churchill´s view that the King should be supported regardless of the political situation.

In London, the King confirmed to the Foreign Office that he had refused to sign the constitutional act. He would accept Damaskinos as his representative in Greece, and as a

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[16]Churchill´s minute, 10 March; Leeper´s telegram 154, 13 March; and Eden´s memorandum, 17 March, PREM3 211/11.

member of his Government, but not as regent.[17] The Archbishop would therefore have no authority to act for the crown, except as a negotiator. Leeper reacted with a strong telegram to the effect that the King was endangering not only the monarchy, but the future of his country.[18]

Churchill told Eden, `I think the Greek position has got to get worse before it gets better. I do not see how the King can worsen his own position by refusing to sign new documents. It seems to me that Tsouderos has been giving him right advice behind the scenes, while puffing away for our delectation in public.´[19] Before Eden could reply, the situation had worsened. While the messages from Churchill, Roosevelt, and the Soviet Union may have had a major effect in bringing about the guerrilla truce of the Plaka bridge, the failure of the King to make a clear declaration of intent seems to have been the root cause of the outbreak of mutiny in the Greek armed forces in Egypt in early April.[20]

Tsouderos, in the face of the mutiny which he blamed on the King´s intransigence, had lost whatever support he had

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[17]The King stated that he had received advice from Smuts and the Prime Ministers of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand recommending that he not sign. On Eden´s orders, Smuts and the three Prime Ministers were queried, but all stated that they had had no message from the King, and had not made such a comment (FO371/43684/R5084, R5402).

[18]Foreign Office telegram 121, 1 April, PREM3 211/11; Leeper´s telegram 198, 3 April, FO371/43728/R5316.

[19]Minute, 2 April, FO371/43684/R5592.

[20]There seems general agreement that EAM propaganda, intensified by the King´s failure to sign a new statement, set off the revolt (Leeper´s telegram 215, 6 April, PREM3 211/11; Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord*, p. 189; Eden´s minute, 5 April, FO371/43684/R5592).

had from the remainder of the Cabinet. Urged by Leeper to send a further blunt message to the King, he wired his resignation instead.[21] The King accepted; he did make a statement to the effect that he would abide by a plebiscite, but this was not accepted at face value by the Greeks in Cairo; there were strong doubts as to whether he would actually comply.[22]

Churchill, temporarily in charge of the Foreign Office,[23] bombarded Leeper with instructions on handling the mutiny, which was soon put down by British military and naval forces. He made a statement of his personal policy towards Greece for delivery to the Greek politicians and mutineers, a statement whose sincerity seems questionable. He stressed that the King could not be discarded `to suit a momentary surge of appetite amongst ambitious emigré non-entities', presumably referring to the Cairo politicians who had toppled Tsouderos; and denied that the Greeks could `find constitutional expression in particular sets of guerrillas, in many cases indistinguishable from banditti, who were masquerading as saviours of their country'. In his peroration he went so far as to say `[The King] submits himself freely to judgement of the people as soon as normal conditions permit', and `Once the German invader has been

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[21]Leeper's telegrams 198-200, 3-4 April, FO371/43728/R5316 and R5317.

[22]Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 496; FRUS, 1944, V, 95.

[23]Eden, exhausted by the dual responsibility for the Foreign Office and the leadership of the House of Commons, went on leave from 6 to 14 April (Cadogan, *Diaries*, pp. 617, 623).

driven out Greece can be a republic or a monarchy entirely as the people wish'. One would hardly imagine that George II would have signed such a definite statement; it was his refusal to do so which was a major factor in provoking the mutiny.[24]

Churchill sent a copy of this statement to Roosevelt, along with background information on the mutiny. Roosevelt replied with an unsolicited message which might be given to the Greeks in Cairo. Without mentioning the King, this expressed the hope that the British course of action would `succeed in bringing back the Greeks into the camp of the Allies' and called on all Greeks `to show a personal unselfishness' to calm the troubles. It would appear that the State Department was not consulted in the preparation of this appeal, which was published in the Cairo press on 1 May. The Greek Ambassador in Washington protested to the State Department that Roosevelt had been too harsh in suggesting that the Greeks had left the `camp of the Allies' because of the mutiny.[25]

Churchill thanked Roosevelt and directed that the President's message be read to the mutineers, but he was clearly worried about the possibility of American interference. A few days earlier, he had instructed Leeper and all others concerned: `On no account accept any assistance from American or Soviet sources, other than as specifically

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[24]Letter, 16 April, FRUS, 1944, V, 97-99.

[25]*Ibid.*, pp. 106. Hull seems to have had to ask the White House for a copy of Roosevelt's message which he received one week later.

enjoined by me.'[26] This probably explains why Leeper turned MacVeagh down when the latter asked if the Americans could be of any help. MacVeagh inferred that Leeper feared the Americans would offer themselves as arbitrators, which might result in a less than complete victory.[27] Neither Churchill's nor Roosevelt's appeals seems to have had much effect on the mutineers or the politicians.

Tsouderos, after a brief interlude, was replaced by George Papandreou, who had been brought out of Greece as a leader of the moderate elements in the homeland. Initially, Papandreou was sworn in without a cabinet (civil servants temporarily administering the governmental departments) until a fully representative government could be established. This was eventually formed after a major conference was held in the Lebanon. Papandreou deliberately avoided the constitutional question concerning the future of the King until a new government could be formed.

After the Lebanon conference, while EAM was negotiating the terms upon which it would enter the Government, the position of the King was a fundamental issue to be settled before EAM would join the Cabinet.[28] Papandreou, after discussions with Leeper and the King, drafted a statement

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[26]Churchill-Roosevelt messages, 16-18 April, FRUS, 1944, V, 96-99; Churchill's telegram 7808/4, 14 April, PREM3 211/11.

[27]MacVeagh-Leeper conversation, 19 April, during which MacVeagh learned of Roosevelt's messaage for the first time (Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 502-503; FRUS, 1944, V, 101).

[28]MacVeagh's telegram, 6 June, *ibid.*, pp. 115-116; Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 535-538.

which claimed that the constitutional question had ceased to exist since it was accepted by all that there would be a `free and genuine´ referendum. So far as the timing of the King´s return was concerned, this would be a decision made in consultation with his government. The new Greek Cabinet approved this formula, and the King gave his approval, although there is evidence that he accepted it reluctantly. He seems to have believed that he was not irrevocably committed to postpone his return until a plebiscite; even if he was, he felt that a Greek Government could release him from his promise.[29]

Most of the existing Cabinet appear to have believed that the King had made a firm promise, and statements to this effect were made in BBC broadcasts. The American Ambassador felt that the radio announcement was a deliberate ploy on the part of Leeper to prevent the King from going back on his word. Leeper did admit to MacVeagh that he could not be sure of the King´s sincerity.[30] While the EAM delegates to the Lebanon Conference seemed to have accepted the declaration at face value,[31] their colleagues in the mountains pressed for a statement from the King himself.[32] The doubters were right; when the King left Cairo for London

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[29]Leeper´s telegram 405, 13 June, FO371/43732/R9261; MacVeagh´s telegrams, 13 and 16 June, FRUS, 1944, V, 122-124.

[30]Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 542, 544.

[31]Leeper´s telegrams 415 and 417, 14 and 15 June, FO371/43742/R9409, R9450.

[32]EAM message to Papandreou, reported to MacVeagh by the British Embassy, Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 562.

a few weks later, he made it clear to Leeper that he did not feel imself bound by Papandreou's statement on the constitutional question; he would only conform to the letter to Tsouderos of 8 November.[33]

3. Preparations for the Liberation of Greece

By August 1944, it was becoming evident that the Germans were withdrawing from Greece. Preparations began for the reentry of the Greek Government accompanied by a small British force, whose actual mission was the prevention of a takeover by EAM. In a paper summarising the situation, the Foreign Office stated that the King had announced in his 8 November letter that he would make no decision about the timing of his return to Greece until the country was liberated and that he would then act in agreement with his Government. The Greek Ministers had announced that in their opinion the King should await the decision of a plebiscite. In the Foreign Office view, the Greek Government should advise the King not to return immediately and he would agree. The question was one which should be settled between the King and his Government, without British intervention. The Foreign Office paper failed to reflect the doubts on all sides as to the King's sincerity.[34]

This paper was discussed in Cabinet the next day. The minutes made no reference to the matter of the King's return, but a 'Corrigendum' was added later at the request

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[33]Leeper's telegram 634, 31 August, PREM3 212/1.
[34]WP(44)433, 8 August, CAB65/53.

of Eden, based on remarks made by Lord Cranborne, the Secretary of State for the Dominions. Cranborne stated that `There would be an advantage from all points of view in the King not returning to Greece until after a plebiscite had taken place. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should advise him that this would be the wisest course and endeavour to persuade him to adopt it.´[35]

Shortly after this War Cabinet meeting, Churchill left London for Italy. The following week he received a message from Eden which mentioned *inter alia* `the Cabinet decision that the King of Greece should be advised not to return to Greece until after the plebiscite, but to come to London´. Churchill fired back a cable asking for full details of the Cabinet decision referred to. On hearing of the `Corrigendum´ he denied that he had seen it, or that he had accepted its contents. Eden replied that, while the Prime Minister had been absent from part of the Cabinet discussion, he had returned before the meeting was over, and had not only agreed to the position, but had made a suggestion as to how it might be implemented. What followed was an interchange of telegrams which could only be likened to a children´s pantomime: `You did approve it.´; `I did not.´; `Oh, yes, you did.´; `Oh, no, I didn´t.´[36]

Churchill was of the opinion that he had not approved the idea of extracting a firm promise that the King would

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[35]WM(44)103rd, 9 August, CAB65/47; telegrams CLASP 74 and 127, 16 and 19 August, PREM3 210.

[36]Telegrams CLASP 56, 74, 89, 127; and CHAIN 51, 78, 113, 114, 143, 15-21 August 1944, PREM3 212/1; and CHAIN 56, PREM3 210.

not go back to Greece until after a plebiscite, which might mean a delay of a year or so. He feared that if the King thought the idea of a delay was a British policy he might abdicate.[37]

By early September, Eden was convinced that there was a considerable belief within and without Greece that the British troops were being sent in to restore the King; `at the point of British bayonets' was the phrase often used. The establishment of the national government in Athens might be very difficult in such circumstances. Eden finally took the bit between his teeth and advised the King not to accompany the government on its return, but failed to gain agreement.[38]

The problem was passed to Churchill, who gave in and informed the King that he would have to remain abroad until the Papandreou government was established; otherwise it would be said that he was being brought back by the British, and this would prejudice him with his own people. According to Churchill, the King accepted this view `as he knows I am his friend'. The problem was therefore solved temporarily, although the suspicion remained in many Greek minds that the British intended to allow the King to return before the plebiscite. Churchill privately told Eden that he would disavow Papandreou if he did not bring the King back as soon

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[37]Telegrams CHAIN 78 and 113, PREM3 212/1.

[38]Telegram, 7 September, FO954/11B. The Foreign Office suggested to King George VI that he urge the Greek monarch to seek the advice of his government as soon as possible concerning a return prior to a plebiscite (FO371/43716/R14687), but there is no evidence that this was carried out.

as the situation permitted, which presumably meant some time after the liberation, but prior to any plebiscite.[39] Eden agreed that it would not be fair to expect the King to remain outside Greece until a plebiscite could be held.[40]

The King, for reasons which are unclear, appointed his brother Prince Paul, the heir to the throne, as Regent in Cairo during his own absence in London. Eden felt that Paul would be more trouble than the King, because `he has less brains and a German wife [Princess Frederika]'. He recommended to Churchill that a regency council be established instead. Churchill felt that this would be offensive to the King, although he accepted that the King must be kept out of the way until Papandreou's Government was firmly established.[41] At the same time, a group of Greek political leaders in Cairo, who had resigned from the Government, made their re-entry conditional on the appointment of a Regent <u>in</u> Greece, thus turning down the idea of the Crown Prince as Regent.[42]

As the day of liberation approached, Papandreou began to see the need for some sort of regency to be established in Athens. He told Macmillan of a plan for a regency

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[39]Eden, 2 October, and Churchill, 6 October, PREM3 212/9; Churchill, 4 October, FO371/43717/R16400.

[40]Eden's minute, 4 October, PREM 212/9.

[41]Eden, 27 September and 4 October; and Churchill, 29 September and 10 October, PREM3 212/9. Churchill's final words to Eden were 'We might end up in Athens ourselves.' See also Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 592; Macmillan, *War Diaries*, p. 538; Macmillan, *Blast of War* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 579; Stelio Hourmouzios, *No Ordinary Crown* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1972), pp. 161-164.

[42]Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 604, 614.

commission to be instituted to facilitate the replacement of ministers and the signing of decrees. Macmillan saw no need for a regency in the first days of liberation; instead the King's approvals could be obtained by the Greek Ambassador in London. After the government was duly established, it would be easier to obtain the King's consent to a regency. Macmillan's proposal was put into effect.[43] The liberation therefore took place without any arrangements for a regency, and without any clear decision as to when the King would be allowed to return.

4. The Churchill-Stalin Percentage Agreement

Meanwhile, military developments on the Eastern Front began to concern those involved in Greek affairs. From early 1944 it was evident that Soviet armies would soon be moving westward and southward into the Balkans. Once the Soviets entered Bulgaria, they might continue into Greece, either in pursuit of the Germans, or, if the Germans had left, simply as the liberating force. In May Churchill pointed out to Eden the danger of Communist `infusion and invasion' of the Balkans. His warning was soon followed by Eden's conversations with Soviet Ambassador Gusev and the

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[43]Macmillan, *War Diaries*, p. 548; Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 647.

`percentage agreements´. The general lines of this development have been analysed elsewhere;[44] here there are only two questions requiring discussion: Was Greece the predominant, if not the only, factor which impelled Churchill and Eden to embark on these negotiations? and: Does the American response to this diplomacy offer any explanation of their policy towards Greece?[45]

In the initial step which led to the agreement, Churchill spoke of issues developing between Britain and the Soviet Union in Italy, the northern Balkans, `and above all in Greece´.[46] Eden´s conversations with Gusev were limited to the possibility of dividing responsibility for Roumania

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[44]The exact details of the ´percentage agreements´ are best set forth by Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, III, pp. 115-123, 140-141, 146-153, and 350-351. Discussions with emphasis on Greece include Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, pp. 276-285; Stephen G. Xydis, ´The Secret Anglo-Soviet Agreement on the Balkans,´ *Journal of Central European Affairs*, XV-3 (October 1955), pp. 239-262; and Churchill, *Second World War*, VI, 72-77, 194-201. Panos Tsakaloyannis, ´The Moscow Puzzle,´ *Journal of Contemporary History*, XXI-1 (January 1986), pp. 37-55, concentrates on Greece, but ignores Eden´s discussions with Gusev, which casts some doubt on his view that the agreement had no effect on Soviet policy towards Greece. Other treatments of value are John Lukacs, ´The Night Stalin and Churchill Divided Europe,´ *New York Times Magazine*, 5 October 1969; Joseph M. Siracusa, ´The Meaning of TOLSTOY,´ *Diplomatic History*, III-4 (Fall 1979), pp. 443-463; and ´The Night Stalin and Churchill Divided Europe,´ *Review of Politics*, XLIII-3 (July 1981), pp. 381-409; Albert Resis, ´The Churchill-Stalin Secret "Percentages" Agreement on the Balkans,´ *American Historical Review*, LXXXIII-2 (April 1978), pp. 368-387; and FRUS, 1944, I, 1004-1019, and V, 112-131.

[45]There is a third question pertaining to Greece, that of whether Stalin, in failing to support EAM in 1944-1945, was carrying out his promises to Churchill. While intriguing and unanswered, it has no effect on Anglo-American relations with Greece.

[46]Churchill´s minutes, 4 May 1944, FO371/43636/R7380.

and Greece.[47] Churchill did add Bulgaria to the proposal in mid-June, thus raising the offer to Stalin to two countries for one; but the grudging approval by Roosevelt for a three-month trial period applied only to Roumania and Greece.[48]

It was only on the occasion of Churchill's visit to Moscow in October 1944 that the scheme of `percentages' of influence in the five countries (Greece, Bulgaria, Roumania, Hungary, and Yugoslavia) was initiated. While the thought of extending the Romania/Greece arrangement to the other three may have been in the minds of Churchill and Eden somewhat earlier, there seems little doubt that the plan originated in the desire to safeguard British interests in Greece. Perhaps the most telling evidence is that in Churchill's phrases `I had obtained Russian abstention at a heavy price' and `having paid the price to Russia for freedom of action in Greece'.[49] In actuality, this was the only gain for Britain from the set of agreements which thoroughly irritated the State Department, if not Roosevelt, and may have assisted Stalin in gaining complete dominance over Eastern Europe.

The second question, that of any revelation of U.S. policy towards Greece from the American attitude to the percentage agreement, can be answered only by implication. Certainly the State Department's response is strong evidence

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[47]Eden telegram 1377 to Moscow, 5 May 1944, *ibid.*, R7214.

[48]Churchill's C-700, and Roosevelt's R-560, 11 and 12 June; *Churchill-Roosevelt Correspondence*, ed. Warren F. Kimball (Princeton University Press, 1984), III, 178-180, 182.

[49]*Second World War*, VI, 239.

of that agency's fervent opposition to spheres of influence, balance of power, and wartime agreements on post-war settlements. At the same time, their objections are doctrinaire and general, giving no attention to the specific matter of Greece, or to the possible advantages of maintaining Western influence in at least one area of the Balkans.

Roosevelt himself seems not to have objected so much on doctrinaire grounds; his attitude was one of unconcern. In October, when asked by Churchill for his approval of the forth-coming talks with Stalin on the Balkans, he drafted a reply indicating that he was not interested one way or another in arrangements between Churchill and Stalin on the Balkans. Only swift action by Hopkins resulted in the United States maintaining a partial watching brief during the Moscow meeting, along with a covenant by Roosevelt that any decision would be prelimnary to a three-power summit conference.[50] In his correspondence, the President made no specific mention of Greece, much less of the possible advantages of the proposal for Greece or for the West.[51]

In summary, Churchill's agreement with Stalin concerning the Balkans may have been a significant factor in preventing a Soviet invasion of Greece. If so, it was a major diplomatic success, unless it is believed that Churchill's

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[50]*Hopkins Papers*, ed. Robert E. Sherwood (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1949), pp. 825-826; original draft and final version of Roosevelt's reply, Kimball, *Roosevelt-Churchill Correspondence*, III, 343-344.

[51]Kimball, *Roosevelt-Churchill Correspondence*, III, 344 and 365-366; *Stalin's Correspondence with Roosevelt and Truman*, ed. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. (New York: Capricorn, 1965) pp. 164 and 166-167.

concessions gave the Soviets significant assistance in establishing their control over the remainder of the Balkans. The agreement flew against the principles of the State Department, and probably reinforced that agency's already strong view that the British intended to continue their imperialistic path in the Near East. Their objections carried little weight when American diplomacy was being conducted by the President and his private advisors. Roosevelt's disinterest in the matter was typical of his lack of concern for Greece. While his three-month approval was extended indefinitely by his acceptance of the October agreement, it is probable that he saw the arrrangement as one which would be superseded by the eventual peace settlement. In the final analysis, the percentage agreement has little long-term significance with regard to Greece, unless it did prevent the entry of the Red Army.

Chapter V

The Liberation of Greece

1. Military Preparations for the Liberation

In addition to the problems of spheres of influence and the timing of the King's return, there had to be some consideration of how the Greek Government was to be restored to the homeland. Until the Quebec Conference of August 1943, it had been assumed that Greece would be liberated by a military and naval attack which would involve actual combat with the Germans. Areas captured would be placed under military control initially with the Greek Government establishing itself gradually in the rear areas and expanding its authority as the battle lines moved forward. The decison taken at Quebec to engage in no major military operations in the Balkans meant that liberation would await a German withdrawal or surrender.

Shortly after the Conference, the Foreign Office initiated a discussion concerning the need for British troops to accompany the Government-in-Exile back into Greece in order to prevent civil war or a *coup d'etat*. Their views were considered by the Chiefs of Staff, who had received an

estimate from the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, (Wilson)[1] that two divisions would be required. The Chiefs felt that such a large force would create a bad precedent for other Allied countries under occupation. They also believed that the return of the King with such a force would seriously increase the chance of a civil war. Eden quoted these opinions in a minute to Churchill, with the comment that no other Allied country was as divided as Greece. Even so, he discounted the possiblity of trouble in Greece unless `one of the guerrilla organisations tries to seize power'. Churchill then wrote to the Chiefs of Staff saying that five thousand troops should be sent in, `only to prevent rioting in the capital or incursions from the countryside'.[2]

The question of troops for the liberation seems to have been then ignored until the following May when Lord Moyne, the new Minister of State for the Middle East, appealed to Churchill for a commitment of two divisions, citing the threat represented by Soviet advances into Romania and Bulgaria, and the dangers of EAM. Churchill replied `One may often foresee evils without being able to avert them. I am passing your message to the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff Committee.'[3]

A few days later Eden reminded Churchill of his decision of the previous September that only five thousand

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[1]Henry Maitland Wilson (1881-1964), Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, 1943; Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre, 1944.

[2]Letters and minutes, 21-29 September 1943, PREM3 210.
[3]Telegram MRI9953, 8 May 1944, FO371/43714/R7467; telegram 1055H, 9 May, PREM3 210.

troops would be necessary for the liberation. The Foreign Secretary pointed out the increased strength of EAM since that time and hesitantly suggested that that number might not be adequate. Churchill still felt that five thousand troops plus a few armoured cars would be all that could be spared. At the same time he told the Chief of Staff that troops would not be sent in unless the Germans were withdrawing and the British had `the great majority of Greeks on our side, as well as the Government'.[4] This was not accepted by the Chiefs, who explored the problem further.

They asked the Joint Planning Staff to consider whether British policy in Greece could be maintained with only economic and `other non-military' pressure. The planners, after a month's deliberation, concluded that EAM might attempt a coup within a fortnight of the arrival of the British force but their control would be weak and would probably collapse with the continued presence of the British. If the arrival of the troops were to be delayed by a month or so, EAM would be firmly established. They reccomended the despatch of a force of ten thousand plus armoured cars.[5]

'The Chiefs felt this figure was too low, and decided to plan for eighty thousand with only ten thousand to be used initially in the hope that the remainder would not be

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[4]Eden, 19 May, and Churchill, 21 May, PREM3 210; minute, 21 May, FO371/43714/R8563.

[5]COS(44)178(1), 1 June, FO371/43714/R9025, and JP(44)155(Final), 30 June, 43715/R11755.

needed. Perhaps they felt the Americans would not agree to a larger initial force, but might allow more troops to be sent in if trouble ensued. Eden wrote to Churchill that ten thousand might not be adequate, but the British Government would be justified in sending in this number, even if no more were available, The matter went forward to the War Cabinet, with some fears on the part of Eden that Herbert Morrison[6] would wanted an assurance that the troops would not be used to put the King back on the throne. Attlee[7] agreed with the dispatch of troops, but suggested that they be sent in `ostensibly in connection with relief operations' which he felt would mean `less chance of becoming involved in Greece'. The War Cabinet agreed to the ten thousand man force, but included Attlee's phrase `ostensibly in connection with relief' in their conclusions.[8]

Churchill commented to Eden on these decisions from Italy, having left London immediately after the Cabinet meeting. He noted that the Americans should be told of the decision on troops before they learned of it through the Combined Chiefs of Staff.[9] The need to discuss the liberation of Greece with the Americans raised a number of points. There were major advantages in involving the United States in the military operation. The Foreign Office and the Cabinet feared that the despatch of troops to Greece would

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[6]Herbert Morrison, (1888-1965), Labour Party leader; Home Secretary in the Coalition Government.

[7]Then Deputy Prime Minister.

[8]COS(44)233, COS(44)242, and COS(44(640), 6 and 20 July, FO371/43715/R11755 and R12005; minute, 24 July, *ibid.*, R12086; WM(44)103rd, 9 August, CAB65/47.

[9]Telegram CHAIN 56, 16 August, PREM3 210.

be seen as the restoration of the King with British bayonets. Even a token number of U.S. soldiers under arms would make the action an Allied undertaking, and do much to prevent accusations of neo-colonialism from the American press, as well as from British liberal and left-wing circles.

MacVeagh took the view that it would be to the benefit of all concerned if the entire liberation was placed in American hands. This would ensure that the operation would not be imperiled by what he termed `the bitterness, suspicion and distrust which British mistakes in this war have aroused´. Such an arrangement might also serve to keep the peace in the Balkans by giving the lead there to the power which had no self-interest in the area, rather than allowing it to be an arena of conflict betwen Britain and Russia. In late February 1944, he recommended this course to the State Department and, in a personal letter, to Roosevelt, who ignored it. MacVeagh did learn that his plan had been circulated to senior officers of the State Department and was considered `a masterpiece´, but that was the last he heard of it.[10]

He was unaware that four days after the despatch of his letter to the President (no doubt before its arrival in Washington), Roosevelt had sent a letter to the Secretary of State concerning civil affairs in the Balkans (Greece was specifically mentioned). U.S. participation would be

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[10]Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 449-596 *passim*, but especially pp. 449-456, 465, 507; other details on the relief operations in FRUS, 1944, V, 179-194.

limited to the provision and distribution of relief supplies, and no American troops would be used as occupation forces.[11] MacVeagh learned that this was the War Department's policy a few weeks later from an UNRRA official just arrived from the United States, but it was four months before an official statement reached him. He was given to understand that the justification for this policy was that `The Balkan operation is not a military one and will not help to win the war.' MacVeagh confided to his diary `Granted; but what are we going to win the war for?' Further, Washington insisted that, at least as far as Greece was concerned, the word `Allied' should not be used.[12]

While no specific reason for the adamant refusal to consider even a joint liberation operation has been found, it is probable from the context of Roosevelt's statement that it was based on a fear of the necessity of a long-term occupation. This came at at time when the President was refusing to consider U. S. participation even in the occupation of Austria. His position was reluctantly accepted by the British, who felt it unnecessary and unhelpful. Attlee, still concerned with the possible effect of a British-only military force, suggested again that the entire liberation operation be conducted under the guise of a relief effort. The Foreign Office pointed out

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[11]Letter, 21 February, cited in FRUS, *Quebec*, 1944, p. 216.

[12]Diary entry, 14 March, Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 466-467; State Department telegram, 7 July, FRUS, 1944, V, 184, 186-188.

that this might be acceptable to the Greek Government, but could hardly be kept secret from the Americans.[13]

The sum and substance of the matter was that the Americans would participate in the re-occupation of Greece only in the role of relief administrators. The United States Government had been concerned at the plight of the Greek people under German occupation since 1941. In early 1942 it began discussions with the British to permit shipments of foodstuffs by Swedish authorities. This led to a continuous, if limited, supply of essential items to Greece (with German permission) for the remainder of the occupation.[14] In January 1944, the State Department began discussions with British representatives and UNRRA officials concerning the provision of relief after liberation. A joint U.S.-U.K. headquarters called Allied Military Liaison (AML) was established in Cairo to carry out this mission in Greece and in other Balkan countries. MacVeagh was immediately involved in the planning of the relief undertaking, which was obviously going to have to be connected with the military operation to return the Greek Government to Athens.

Churchill, in his message to Eden recommending that the Americans be informed of the plans for the liberation expedition, also pointed out that it would be necessary to ask for some American military support. This would amount to the loan of troop carrier aircraft to transport part of the force to Greece. Before returning to London, he composed a flowery letter to Roosevelt, pointing out some-

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[13]Minute, 16 August, FO371/43715/R12722.
[14]FRUS, 1942, II, 724-797; and FRUS, 1943, IV, 167-177.

what inaccurately that `We have always marched together in complete agreement about Greek policy, and I refer to you on every important point.´ After rather idealistic calls for unity, Churchill asked for agreement to use ten thousand British troops, including paratroops for which American troop carriers would be needed.[15] This was at a time when the Italian theatre had been stripped of a great deal of its combat strength for the invasion of southern France, and when troops were badly needed for Normandy.

The request was not received in the spirit in which it was sent. The British had to `prod the Americans´ for an answer.[16] Churchill wrote again in an uncharacteristic, apologetic manner. He made clear the importance he attached to the matter by ending on a defiant note, saying, `Should you feel you do not wish to express an opinion on the

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[15]Telegram 755, 17 August, FRUS, 1944, V, 132-133. The demands made on British resources in the Mediterranean Theatre at this time for DRAGOON (the invasion of southern France) are important in analysing the problems of providing a liberation force. This is brought out forcefully by Lars Bærentzen, ´The German Withdrawal from Greece in 1944 and British Naval "Inactivity",´ *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, V-2 (October 1987), pp. 237-265). While Bærentzen stresses the factors affecting the Royal Navy, his comments are equally applicable to all British resources. Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, feared serious American protests concerning the removal of British units from Italy and elsewhere in the theatre (Bryant, *Triumph in the West*, pp. 253, 272-272, 294, 297). Such protests apparently never came; the possibility may have been exaggerrated by Brooke because of his fervent opposition to the use of any British troops in Greece.

[16]Piers Dixon, *Double Diploma* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), p. 113.

subject I am quite willing to go ahead on my own.'[17] This was a rash promise, although an alternative plan, not communciated to the Americans, was considered. This amounted to transferring British troop carrier aircraft from `Northwest Europe' to the forces entering Greece.[18] It is not understood why it would be easier to obtain aircraft from the northern theatre than from the Mediterranean, but perhaps British aircraft were available there which were not under the control of SHAEF.

Roosevelt finally replied quite coldly that he had no objection to the use of a British force to preserve order nor to the use of American aircraft if they could be spared from other operations.[19] The implementing directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff specified that one division of British troops could be used as `a purely British force, supplemented by U.S. transport aircraft as available to you [Wilson] and as can be spared'.[20] The Americans made it very clear that while a few U.S. military personnel would accompany the force in order to administer relief supplies,

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[17]Telegram C-770, 25 August, Kimball, *Churchill-Roosevelt Correspondence*, III, 296.

[18]COS(44)287, 25 August, FO371/43715/R13411. The idea was still being considered on 6 September, apparently because the American aircraft made available were also needed to deliver supplies to Tito (43716/R14104).

[19]Telegram, 26 August, FRUS, 1944, V, 133-134.

[20]This directive, FAN 409, 8 September (copy in FO371/43715/R15254), was prepared at Quebec. Curiously, it is mentioned, but not printed, in FRUS, *Quebec*, 1944, p. 439.

no U.S. combat troops could be used.[21] The designation `Allied Military Liaison' (AML) had to be changed to `Military Liaison' (ML).

The question of the command of the liberation expedition was complicated. It could not be placed entirely under the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre (Wilson), since the theatre was a joint U.S.-British formation, and the Americans would not accept the responsibility for the military operation which this arrangement would imply. After long-winded discussion and negotiation, it was decided that Wilson would supervise the relief operation of ML as Supreme Allied Commander, and the military operation wearing his other hat as the senior *British* officer in the theatre. Direct supervision of the military operation was assigned to General Paget, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, a purely British formation. Actual command of the expedition was given to Lt-Gen Ronald Scobie with an American officer (Brigadier General Percy Sadler) as Deputy Commander for Military Liaison, that is, for relief matters.[22]

With these problems solved, the British liberation force was assembled, along with appropriate naval and air support from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, and the American troop carriers. As the Germans withdrew, British forces were landed, Athens was occupied, and the Greek

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[21]Undated briefing papers, FRUS, *Quebec*, 1944, pp. 212-217; Macmillan, *Blast of War*, p. 573.

[22]Wilson's telegrams, 4 and 22 August, and minutes, 5, 6, 8 and 18 August, FO371/43715/R12086, R12962, R13090; Joint Service Mission telegrams, 31 August and 4 September, and Wilson's telegram, 5 September, 43716/R13966 and PREM3 210.

Government installed. The liberators were welcomed, even by EAM.[25]

2. The Second Round of Civil War December 1944--January 1945

The situation changed rapidly. EAM still controlled most of Greece outside Athens and Salonika. While its representatives were included in the expanded Government, it is not clear whether it had any real intention of co-operating with the other political parties in the long term. It feared the introduction of royalist Greek troops from Italy and the support given by the British and the leaders of the coalition to the remnants of the non-communist resistance. They foresaw a plot to destroy them and establish a right-wing administration. In early December, the pro-Communist ministers resigned and a full-scale revolt against the Greek Government began. Within a few days this included EAM attacks on British troops as well, until the official Government and British forces held only a small area in central Athens, along with scattered military bases elsewhere.

Churchill ordered Scobie to `act as if you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion is in progress´, and concluded: `We have to hold and dominate Athens. It would

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[25]Descriptions of the first few days of liberation are provided by Leeper, *When Greek Meets Greek*, pp. 73-80; Macmillan, *War Diaries*, pp. 552-558; William Hardy McNeil, *The Greek Dilemma* (London: Gollancz, 1947), pp. 124-129; and Richard Capell, *Simionata* (London: MacDonald, n.d. (1946)), pp. 39-48.

be a great thing for you to succeed in this without bloodshed if possible, but also with bloodshed if necessary.'[24] Of this message, which was to give rise to extensive criticism in both America and Britain, Churchill himself said, `of all the telegrams I have written in this war it is the one I least liked after I had written it'.[25] At the same time, large numbers of British troops were rushed to Greece, until the total strength was three divisions, in contrast to the one authorised by the Combined Chiefs of Staff.[26] The breakdown of relations between EAM and the remainder of the Government, culminating in the outbreak of

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[24]Telegram 357, 5 December, FO371/43736/R19933.

[25]Dixon, *Double Diploma*, p. 118.

[26]British authorities apparently did not seek prior American agreement before moving additional troops to Greece. Some time prior to 30 December, the American Chiefs of Staff gave qualified approval for the movement of one division to Greece instead of to Palestine. Shortly thereafter, the British were forced to tell them of the possibility that another division would have to be moved to Greece from Italy. On 28 December the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff told the British Joint Services Mission in Washington that they saw no reason why formal Combined Chiefs of Staff approval was necessary for the transfer of a division originally destined for Palestine, since FAN 409 stated that Alexander acted in Greece in a purely British capacity. This seems contrary to the actual wording of FAN 409 which limited British troops to one division. The British Chiefs of Staff did point out that they fully realised that ground troops were badly needed in northern Europe by Eisenhower. (Combined Chiefs of Staff memorandum 750/1 and Joint Services Mission minute 474, both of 28 December 1944, and Combined Chiefs of Staff memorandum 750/2, 16 January 1945, all in CAB122/753.)

civil war on 3 December, are analysed in detail elsewhwere.[27]

It was evident that force alone would not establish stable government. Papandreou was ready to resign, but Churchill instructed Leeper: `Force Papandreou to stand to his duty. Should he resign he should be locked up until he comes to his senses, when the fighting will probably be over.'[28] Even so, a new administation was needed, with stronger leadership and more acceptable policies. From the beginning, it was accepted by all the British authorities concerned, except perhaps Churchill, that even the most able Prime Minister would fail unless the regency question could be solved.

Oddly, the first attention given to the problem seems to be that of the American State Department, where a memorandum for the President was prepared on 6 December. This enclosed a draft message to be sent by Roosevelt to

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[27]From a political standpoint, the definitive account is John O. Iatrides, *Revolt in Athens*. Other useful discussions: George M. Alexander, 'The Demobilization Crisis of November 1944,' in *Greece in the 1940s*, ed. John O. Iatrides (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1981), pp. 156-166; Lars Bærentzen, 'The Demonstration in Syntagma Square,' *Scandanavian Studies in Modern Greek*, II (1978) pp. 3-52; William Hardy McNeil, *The Greek Dilemma*', ch. 7, and 'The Outbreak of Fighting in Athens, 1944,' *American Slavic and East European Review*, VIII-4 (1949), pp. 239-251; L. S. Stavrianos, 'The Immediate Origins of the Battle of Athens,' *loc. cit.*, pp. 252-261; and Heinz Richter, 'The Battle of Athens and the Role of the British,' in *Greece*, ed. Marion Sarafis (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1980), pp. 78-90. The military operation is treated in detail by William Jackson, *History of the Second World War: The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, (London: HMSO, 1988), VI-3, 18-29, 73-109, 164-172; see also Edgar O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War* (London: Faber, 1966).

[28]Telegram 357, 5 December, FO371/43736/R19933.

Churchill recommending Papandreou's dismissal (on grounds that he was responsible for what the draft called `Athens' "bloody Sunday" '), and the establishment of a regency. The memorandum was not sent to the President because of problems created by Stettinius,[29] the new Secretary of State, in commenting on events in Athens (discussed *infra*, p. 157).[30] Shortly after, MacVeagh reported that the idea of a regency was being revived in Athens. The State Department then sent a more detailed memorandum on the subject to Roosevelt on 13 December. On the same day, the President made the desirability of a regency a major point in a cable to Churchill.[31]

The Prime Minister was most concerned about the Greek situation, particularly after a debate in the House of Commons on 8 December, in which the policies of the government were attacked by left-wing members for failing to assure the House that British military forces would not be used `to disarm the friends of democracy'. He summoned Macmillan,[32] who was in London on his way to Washington, and sent him to Athens to take charge of negotiations.[33]

Meanwhile, Leeper recommended to the Foreign Office that his plan of the year before be put into effect, that

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[29]Edward R. Stettinius, jr. (1900-1949), Lend-Lease Administrator, 1941-1943; Under Secretary of State, 1943-1944; Secretary of State, November 1944-June 1945.

[30]NARS 868.00/12-644.

[31]MacVeagh's telegram, 11 December; memorandum and Roosevelt's message, FRUS, 1944, V, 146, 150-151.

[32]Harold Macmillan (1894-1987), Minister of State Resident at Allied Headquarters, 1942-1945.

[33]406 *Parl. Deb.*, cols. 1858-1909; Macmillan, *War Diaries*, pp. 599-600.

is, that Damaskinos be made regent. Alexander[34], who had replaced Wilson as Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, was now in Athens. He reported to London that he agreed with Leeper. Presumably as a result of these two messages, Churchill asked George II to appoint the Archbishop as regent. While the King agreed that his own presence in Greece would neither help his dynasty nor the current situation, and admitted that the British were right in not returning him, he would not make Damaskinos regent. He would agree only to appoint Damaskinos as prime minister to replace Papandreou.

Churchill took this reply to the War Cabinet to be considered in the light of the recommendations of Leeper and Alexander. The War Cabinet sent Churchill and Eden back to the King to say that they favoured the appointment of Damaskinos as regent until the end of the emergency. The King remained adamant. The War Cabinet then concluded, rather weakly, that Damaskinos should be made prime minister, if British officials in Athens thought this would be satisfactory.[35] Upon receipt of Churchill's account of his meetings with the King and the War Cabinet's conclusions, Macmillan forwarded from Athens a well reasoned explanation as to why the appointment of Damaskinos as prime

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[34]General Sir Harold Alexander (1891-1969), Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, 1942-1943; Commander-in-Chief, Italy, 1943-1944; Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre, 1944-1945.

[35]Leeper's telegram 549, 10 December, FO371/40737/R20427; WM(44)165, 12 December, CAB65/48.

minister would not be desirable. He asked that Churchill `return to the charge´.[36]

Churchill was in some doubt as to whether Macmillan, Leeper, and Alexander were entirely correct in pressing for the appointment of Damaskinos as regent. He had formed a poor impression of the Archbishop, on the ground that the latter had achieved his position by subservience to the Germans. The fact that Damaskinos had then begun a quiet opposition to them once he was in power in the church might only mean that he would be capable of treachery to the British as well. As late as 21 December he characterised the Archbishop as `a Quisling and a Communist´.[37]

Churchill also seems to have listened to the King´s claim that Leeper and company were wrong in their view that there was general support for the Archbishop among the political leaders in Athens. To overcome this suspicion, Leeper and Macmillan tried to induce Papandreou and other members of the government to send telegrams to the King recommending that he give in to Churchill and Eden on the regency question. This resulted in a series of firm promises in Athens, especially by Papandreou, to send the required messages, and claims by the King in London that Papandreou and company were advising him that a regency was unnecessary. It would appear that the King based these claims on messages from Papandreou to the King in which he

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[36]Macmillan´s telegrams 564, 12 December, FO954/11B, and 587, 13 December, FO371/43737/R20427; Churchill´s account, 43698/R20723.

[37]Draft telegram, 17 or 18 December, FO371/43738/R21499; Eden, *The Reckoning*, p. 578.

stated that he was being forced by the British to recommend the regency. Eventually, after numerous War Cabinet discussions, meetings of Churchill and Eden with the King, and further misleading statements by the King, Papandreou on 20 December sent a strong and definite recommendation for a sole regency. Even though this last message did not mention pressure by the British, the King, reported to the Foreign Office that it had.[36]

In view of Papandreou's new message, Churchill and Eden went to see the King. George II still denied that he had received a clear recommendation from his Prime Minister, and claimed that the appointment of Damaskinos would be unconstitutional, since in his view only the heir to the throne could be made regent. Churchill then asked whether he would confirm that he would not return until a plebisicite had been held, to which George II agreed. This apparently surprised Eden, who reminded the King of their conversation in Cairo the previous December in which George II had refused to make such a statement, as the result of his advice from Roosevelt. As Eden understood it, the King had promised only to seek advice from his ministers as to the date of his return.

The King agreed, but said that this statement was made when he still hoped to return at the head of his army and

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[36]Foreign Office telegram 457, 13 December, and Leeper/Macmillan telegrams 602, 611, and 628, 14 and 15 December, FO371/43737/R20933, R20995, and R21048; Leeper/Macmillan telegrams 634 and 638, 17 December, and Foreign Office minutes, 15, 16, and 22 December, 43738/R21148, R21105, R21106, R21290, and R21579; the King's letter to Churchill, WM(44)741, 15 December, CAB66/59.

fight Germans. He now felt himself bound by his pledge of July or August 1943 (presumably the 4 July 1943 broadcast) that he would not return to Greece until the people had expressed their will. Eden indicated that he did not think the Greek people understood that this was the King's position, nor could he recollect a pledge in such terms. The King concluded by saying that, while he could not agree to a regency, he would be glad to help in any other way, such as appointing a new prime minister.[33]

While this clear statement about the return to Greece was seen by Eden as an improvement (assuming the King could be relied upon to make it into a formal declaration), it would do nothing to stop the civil war still raging in Athens, or to establish stable government. On Christmas Eve, Churchill decided to go himself to Greece to find a solution. Taking Eden with him, he first met Damaskinos and almost immediately changed his opinion of him, allegedly because he saw the Archbishop as cast in the mould of `a scheming medieval prelate'. He caused to be brought together on Boxing Day practically all the protangonists in the affair except the King. This dramatic meeting of Greek political leaders, including representatives of EAM, under the chairmanship of Damaskinos, was opened in the presence of Churchill, Eden, Macmillan, Leeper, Alexander, Scobie, and the diplomatic envoys of the Soviet Union, the United

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[33]Eden's telegram to Leeper, 22 December, FO371/43739/R21719. The Foreign Office undertook a detailed investigation to assure themselves that the King had never made a clear promise of this type.

States, and France. The non-Greeks withdrew after Churchill had made clear his determination to obtain a solution.

In the face of the sheer weight of outside authority, the politicians agreed to try to end the civil war.[40] A communique was issued to the press by Leeper, reporting that Damaskinos had informed the British authorities of `the overwhelming desire of those present [at the conference] for the immediate establishment of a regency as an essential prelude to the solution of the many other problems facing the conference'.[41] The agreement stood or fell on the possibility of obtaining the King's approval of the regency,[42] although Churchill later told Roosevelt that he would have had to renounce the King, if he had not agreed. Every possible weapon had to be used on the King--from the definite message of Papandreou to an equally definite appeal for a regency under Damaskinos from Roosevelt.

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[40]The most illuminating accounts of the conference are those by John Colville, *Footprints in Time* (London: Collins, 1976), 174-179, and Pierson Dixon in *Double Diploma*, pp. 120-125. Others are Churchill, *Second World War*, VI, 260-263; Eden, FO371/43639/R21726, and *The Reckoning*, p. 581; Macmillan, *Blast of War*, pp. 627-631, and *War Diaries*, pp. 617-619; Leeper, *When Greek Meets Greek*, pp. 124-126; and Lord Moran, *Winston Churchill: The Strugggle for Survival* (London: Sphere, 1968), pp. 234-237. MacVeagh abandoned his diary in the midst of the Athens fighting (Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 662); his only account is his 27 December telegram, FRUS, 1944, V, pp. 170-171, and an eight page letter, 28 December, NARS 868.00/12-2844. The Confidential Print account is in FO371/48244/R266 and R287.

[41]Macmillan, *War Diaries*, p. 639.

[42]As C. M. Woodhouse points out in *Struggle for Greece*, p. 112, EAM fear of Greek right-wing troops, not the question of the King, was responsible for the outbreak of civil war. This does not invalidate the fact that agreement to end it hinged on the establishment of the regency.

Even with all these pressure points, the King was unwilling to give in. Churchill and Eden returned to London and spent over six hours seeking the King's consent to a regency. He tried to avoid the word regent and wanted to modify his promise that he would not return until a plebiscite could be held.[43] Finally in the early hours of the morning of 30 December, he agreed to announce that he was apppointing Damaskinos Regent. This was accompanied by a firm promise not to return before a `free and fair expression of the national will'.[44] Even after making this definite agreement, he attempted a few days later to qualify his position by sending Papandreou a message in which he claimed to have retained the right to demand that the Regent follow his advice. Papandreou, on the King's orders, published this message, to the dismay of both Damaskinos and the British. The War Cabinet instructed Eden to remonstrate with the King but the latter's actions appear to have had no serious effect.[45] While there were to be further problems with the King, his position in Greek politics was no longer an issue threatening to destroy the government.

The fighting continued, although EAM began negotiations for a truce. The reinforced British forces were gradually gaining the advantage. EAM began a withdrawal from Athens on 5 January and signed a truce on the 10th. Two days later

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[43]Eden, *The Reckoning*, P. 582.

[44]Text of King's public statement, Churchill, *Second World War*, VI, 265-266.

[45]Leeper's telegrams 9 and 10, 1 January, and Foreign Office telegrams 18 and 19, 2 January, FO371/48244/R79 and R129; WM(44)176th, 30 December, CAB65/48; and WM(45)1st, 2 January, CAB65/51.

a formal agreement between EAM and the Greek Government was signed at the village of Varkiza near Athens. This called for a plebiscite to be followed by the election of a constituent assembly, the demobilisation of the ELAS forces, and an amnesty for political crimes.[46]

3. The American Attitude to the British Actions

The American attitude to the problems of Greece in December 1944 was far from helpful. The use of force against the armed uprising of EAM brought widespread criticism of the British in the press of the United States (and in Britain as well). Most of the foreign press corps in Athens was pro-EAM and opposed to official British policy.[47] Their reports created hostility, but much of their criticism was reinforced by the belief outside Greece that the EAM guerrillas were heros of the resistance against the Germans. They could thus be seen as fighting to restore democracy in the face of a British attempt to impose a right-wing monarchy.

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[46]Text in Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord*, pp. 308-310.

[47]A thorough analysis of the attitudes of the British and American correspondents in Athens in December 1944 is provided by Richard Capell, *Simionata*, *passim*. Capell, for the Daily Telegraph, and A. C. Sedgwick of the *New York Times*, were the only two newsmen who did not share the bias. Capell felt that one reason for the antipathy of the press to the British was the uncooperative attitude of Leeper. Leeper at first rebuffed attempts to provide him with a press attache, but Osbert Lancaster, the *Daily Express* cartoonist, was sent out to fulfill this function. From Capell's account, Lancaster was not able to reverse the anti-British tendency.

By those who recognised that EAM was pro-communist or communist-led, the British were accused of endangering the Grand Alliance. The angry journalists failed to comment on the fact that the Soviet press kept silent concerning the use of arms against communist-led organisations (the Churchill-Stalin percentage agreement was not then public knowledge).

The newspaper outcry was not in itself indicative of a strained relationship between the two powers, but the American Government immediately made it clear that it did not support the British actions in Greece. On the day the first riot began in Athens, the American radio service in Europe broadcast a statement by the new American Secretary of State, Stettinius, which 'viewed with sympathy the aspirations of the resistance ~~move-ments~~ movements and the anti-Fascist elements in liberated countries' and stressed that the United States would not attempt to influence the composition of governments in any friendly country. While the message did not specifically mention Greece, it was given full publicity in the Greek Communist newspaper in Athens that day.[48]

This was followed on 5 December with a press statement by Stettinius which was given world-wide publicity. While its subject was a simultaneous political crisis in Italy, it contained a general statement reflecting the principles of the Atlantic Charter to the effect that Americans expected that newly liberated countries should be allowed to work out

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[48]MacVeagh's telegram, 3 December, and State Department reply, 12 December, FRUS, 1944, V, 141-142, 147-148.

their desired forms of government without outside interference.[49] It was taken as American criticism of British actions in Greece.

Churchill immediately sent a cable to Roosevelt[50] which `may well have been the most violent outburst of rage in all of their historic correspondence'.[51] In defending his actions in Greece to the House of Commons, Churchill hardly veiled his vexation at the Americans.[52] The official British historian of these matters states that the British authorities `found the American attitude the more wounding because the Soviet Government had abstained hitherto from any similar conduct or comment. They might well be encouraged now to begin.'[53]

Eden instructed the British Embassy to speak to Stettinius `as roughly as you like'.[54] The senior British diplomat present in Washington, Michael Wright, called on Stettinius with a message from Eden concerning the Greek aspects of the problem which he stated was `too unpleasant' to be left in written form. The American record implies that the British diplomat calmed down only after a pot of tea had been brought to the Secretary of State's office. Wright asked that Stettinius issue an amending statement

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[49]Text in FRUS, *Yalta*, 1945, pp. 266-267.

[50]C-845, 6 December, Kimball, *Churchill-Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp. 437-439.

[51]*Hopkins Papers*, II, 830-831.
[52]406 *Parl. Deb.*, cols. 929-930, 8 December 1944.
[53]Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, III, 461.
[54]Foreign Office telegram 10307, 6 December, FO371/43647/R20178.

with particular reference to Greece. He is said to have concluded his interview by telling the Secretary of State that he would send a message to Eden saying that Stettinius had been `reasonable about this matter´.[55]

The British Embassy reported that Stettinius had approved a hasty draft statement without sufficient reflection,[56] but the American record shows that the statement was approved by three senior State Department officials, and that Stettinius had gone over it carefully because of possible embarrassing questions.[57] Admiral Leahy, the Presidential Chief of Staff, confirmed in his memoirs that the statement was a deliberate announcement of American policy with regard to both Italy and Greece.[58]

Stettinius´ clarifying statement of 7 December does not seem to have been entirely sincere, even though the British Embassy assisted in its drafting.[59] Stettinius wrote to Roosevelt privately saying that in this statement he had attempted to `disassociate us from British policy´. The

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[55]Stettinius ´Record´, 1-9 December, FRUS, *Yalta*, pp. 430-433. Stettinius´ formal Memorandum of Conversation concerning this meeting of 6 December, *ibid*, pp. 269-270, is far less informative.

[56]Telegram 6518, 7 December, FO371/43697/R20239. A month later, in discussing this incident, Stettinius made it clear to Halifax that he strongly opposed actions in the Mediterranean which appeared to reflect British neo-colonialism (telegram 33, 2 January, PREM4 27/10).

[57]Stettinius ´Record´, FRUS, *Yalta*, p. 430. Robert Hathaway, *Ambiguous Partnership* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 90-101, 117, examines the genesis of the Stettinius statement in some detail. He suggests that the circumstances which brought it about led to the American insistence on the Declaration of Liberated Europe at Yalta.

[58]*I Was There* (London: Gollancz, 1950), pp. 334-335.
[59]Text and comment on drafting, FRUS, *Yalta*, p. 433.

American *Associated Press* service saw this second statement as only a further attack on British policy.[60] Alexander Kirk, now American Political Advisor to Alexander, asked the State Department whether the United States military contingent engaged in relief activities in Greece alongside the British should be withdrawn. The Department took the view that any withdrawal might be interpreted as an attempt to use relief as a political weapon.[61]

In what was probably an attempt to mollify Churchill, Harry Hopkins and Forrestal sent congratulations to him on his House of Commons speech of 8 December on Greece.[62] A few days later, Roosevelt sent Churchill a message expressing his appreciation of the `anxious and difficult alternatives' which the British faced in Greece and stating his willingness to give `any help possible'; but the tone is that of the righteous citizen offering aid to an unfortunate offender. Whatever comfort remained was practically destroyed by the continuation:

> As anxious as I am to be of the greatest help to you in this trying situation, there are limitations, imposed in part by the traditional policies of the United States and in part by the mounting adverse reaction of public opinion in this country. No one will understand better than yourself that I, both personally and as Head of State, am necessarily responsive to the state of public feeling. It is for these reasons that it

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[60]*The Diaries of Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.* ed. Thomas M. Campbell and George C. Herring (New York: Vintage, 1968) p. 192.

[61]State Department reply to Kirk, 13 December, FRUS, 1944, V, 212.

[62]Churchill, *Second World War*, VI, 247.

has not been possible to take a stand along with you in the present course of events in Greece.[63]

Even before Roosevelt's *apologia*, another matter relating to Greece flared up. During the most critical stage of the revolt, the American Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral King, ordered the senior American naval commander in the Mediterranean to stop the British using American ships to transfer badly needed supplies to Greece. When Admiral Somerville, the senior British naval officer in the Combined Chiefs of Staff, approached King's Chief of Staff, he was told that this was a war in which the United States was not participating. It seems clear that the British had authority to use the ships and that King was in breach of the Combined Chiefs of Staff system in giving direct orders to an Admiral under the control of the British Commander of the Mediterranean Theatre. Hopkins managed to have the order rescinded before Churchill could make an issue of it with Roosevelt, but it added to the strain between the two powers.[64]

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[63]FRUS, 1944, V, 150-151.

[64]*Hopkins Papers*, pp. 832-834; Churchill's letter, 11 December, and the draft message he originally intended to send to Roosevelt, Kimball, *Churchill-Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp. 452-455; WM(44)164th, 11 December, CAB65/44PREM3 212/5; telegrams to and from Allied Forces Headquarters, British Chiefs of Staff, and British Mission, Washington, 9-13 December, CAB122/567. Lt-Gen J. A. H. Gammell, just returned from a visit to Allied Forces Headquarters, reported to the Chiefs of Staff that the senior American naval and air officers in the theatre had strongly regretted King's actions and had made a special effort to remedy the situation as soon as his order had been rescinded. This included using American bombers to drop ammunition and supplies to the British forces in Greece, which was completely unaauthorised (Letter, 19 December, *loc. cit.*)

The British leaders in Athens during the December revolt were further distressed by the strict, almost ostentatious, attitude of neutrality suddenly adopted by the American Ambassador, and other American officials. The sight of the Stars and Stripes painted on U.S. driven vehicles and worn as armbands by Americans irritated the British. According to Leeper, `this blatant neutrality acted as a tonic to ELAS and was made abundant use of in their propaganda'.[65] Macmillan even reported to the Foreign Office that MacVeagh refused to allow British soldiers to drink from his well, even though the Americans were drawing British rations.[66]

There is no question of a British misunderstanding of the American attitude. MacVeagh wrote that his actions were governed by the desire to make it clear that `as the President said "we are not involved".'[67] At the same time, he was in close contact with the British Ambassador, and asking what the United States might do to help. At Leeper's suggestion, he urged the State Department to support the British plan for a regency.[68]

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[65] *When Greek Meets Greek*, p. 112. He wrote to Sargent on 12 January; 'Inside Athens, we British were all heroes, without discrimination. And I am glad to say the Americans are dirt. Our neutral Allies cut the most ignominious figure during the five weeks that the battle lasted. They were frightened, though their danger was considerably less than ours. They wanted appeasement. They covered themselves with stars and stripes, their arms, the bonnets of their cars, the roofs of their houses, their souls were nothing but an orgy of stars and stripes' (FO800/276).

[66] Telegram 589, 13 December, FO371/43698/R20779.

[67] Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 638; MacVeagh's public statement, *New York Times*, 6 December.

[68] Telegram, 15 December, FRUS, 1944, V, 155.

Macmillan later felt that Churchill, at the great conference in Athens on Boxing Day, was at a considerable disadvantage in not being able to state that Roosevelt had agreed to the British intervention:

> If we could have published his telegram to Churchill [Roosevelt's cold acquiescence to the use of British troops in Greece, 26 August] at that time it would have had a very great effect. But 'the President has let us down badly and Winston is very hurt about it'.[69]

Actually, Roosevelt had given Churchill a modicum of support. In his cable of 13 December, explaining his position in the wake of the Stettinius affair, Roosevelt suggested a regency, and a statement by the King that he would not return before a plebisicite, the latter a complete reversal of his Cairo position.[70] While this provided no specific help, the fact that Roosevelt had suggested the line of action Churchill was to take at the end of the month amounted to accepting responsibility for it. If Churchill had failed, the Americans would have found it difficult to criticise.

Macmillan used the idea that a regency would please the Americans as an argument in attempting to persuade the Greek Government to accept the idea, although he based this on

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[69]Macmillan, *Blast of War*, p. 628. The source is given as Macmillan's diary entry for 26 December, but the printed version (*War Diaries*, p. 618) of this work states 'he went a long way to suggest that Roosevelt had also agreed--as indeed he did in August, and if we could publish his telegram to Winston it would indeed make the Americans look foolish (the President has let us down badly and Winston is very hurt about it)'.

[70]As Orme Sargent was quick to point out (FO371/43698/R21013).

comments by MacVeagh, rather than the President's message. Churchill was not happy with this approach, although Macmillan thought the Prime Minister was merely `upset with the entire situation.'[71] Roosevelt did back up his suggestion with some action, when, at Churchill's request, he sent George II a message indicating that he supported the idea of regency. This must have reached the King just before Churchill and Eden finally obtained the King's agreement, but there is no evidence that it had any effect on the outcome.[72]

Had Britain chosen to bear a grudge over her treatment by the United States, she could not have been blamed. Macmillan pointed out that had there been more support and less hostility from the Americans, the British might have destroyed the pro-communist popular movement in Greece in 1945, so that the troubles of 1946-1949 would never have occurred.[73] Almost three years later, Bevin said, concerning the British entry into Greece in 1944, `. . . we received no support from the U.S. and certainly no help from them. We were tilted at and pulled to pieces in the U.S. on all sides.'[74]

Shortly after the Truman Doctrine speech Churchill wrote two articles for the *New York Times* under the front

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[71]Macmillan's telegram, 17 December, and Churchill's objections, FO371/43738/R21105, R21499; Macmillan, *War Diaries*, p. 612.

[72]Churchill's request and Roosevelt's message to George II, both 28 December, FRUS, 1944, V, 173-175, 177.

[73]*Blast of War*, pp. 663.
[74]Minute, 19 August 1947, FO371/61003/AN2922.

page headline `Churchill Says Britain Saved Greece from Communism´. In these articles, Churchill pointed out that the current hearings in the U.S. Congress over the Greek-Turkey aid bill were concerned with `precisely the issue which broke upon us in Athens in December 1944´. He went on `I was astonished to see what a bad press I got in America. Besides this the attitude of the State Department was sourly critical´. Again, `Even President Roosevelt, whom I had kept constantly informed, remained silent under a series of protesting telegrams from me. When one has been in such a close mental and moral relationship as I have been, and still aspire to be, with great tides of public opinion in a brother nation, it is a shock to feel them flow all of a sudden in the opposite direction.´[75]

4. British and American Policies during the War--A Summary

December 1944 marks the lowest point in Anglo-American relations with regard to Greece. The overall impression for the war years is one of continual disagreement, if not hostility. Until Roosevelt´s message of 13 December, the Americans had maintained neutrality, if not complete disinterest, in what they considered to be a strictly British problem. Roosevelt´s statement `We would take no other position´ at Quebec in 1943; his reply to the King´s request for advice soon after; Hull´s comment on the 4 July 1943

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[75] *New York Times*, 10 and 11 April 1947. The quotations above give only a hint of the full intensity of Churchill´s feelings as expressed in these articles.

statement, and his appeal to the guerrillas for unity in late December 1943, are all vague and often vacuous.

The President's message to the mutineers in April 1944 with its call for Greeks to return to the camp of the Allies was badly received; his advice to the King in Cairo in December 1943 may have prevented a peaceful solution to the problem of the monarchy. Whether the American failure to give enthusiastic support to the percentage agreement had any effect on Greek affairs is questionable. Certainly, the Stettinius statement in early December 1944 not only helped to create an atmosphere of hostility to the British actions in Greece, but may well have given encouragement to EAM to continue the revolt against the Government and the British.

American actions and attitudes were not deliberate attempts to damage British objectives or to impose their own suzerainty over Greece. It was a mixture of a belief that Greece was outside the U. S. area of interest, and the long-standing American view of Britain as an imperialistic power. The inconsistency of a strong belief in the evils of spheres of influence and the assumption that Greece was entirely a British problem is ~~impossible~~ impossible to explain, except in terms of an American lack of understanding of the real implications of their idealistic policy. The Americans saw Britain as being engaged in an attempt to establish a sphere of influence in Greece, by means of the imposition of a client government which was not believed to be acceptable to the majority of the Greek people. The view that the British were attempting to restore their long standing interests in Greece is accurate; the fault is that the Americans equated

it with an out-moded view of the British acquisition of Empire in the late nineteenth century. On both counts, their actions and policies in Latin America gave them little reason to criticise Britain.[75]

Much of the American attitude can be explained in terms of a lack of understanding of Greek affairs and the strategic position of Greece, on the part of Roosevelt, and probably of Hull. The Greek specialists in the State Department, principally Foy Kohler and Wallace Murray, had an excellent understanding of Greek affairs; in fact, their analyses of the position of the Greek King and the effect of British pressure for his restoration are remarkably prescient. Their continued insistence on the need for a plebiscite and for the prohibition of the King's return before it could be held was vindicated by the developments; their prophecies of an EAM attempt at a coup were borne out. From December 1943 they had the advantage of the reports and recommendations of MacVeagh, who had eight years of previous experience in Greece. Despite British views of MacVeagh as a `humourless pedant' and `unlikely to take

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[75]Michael Wright made a spirited attack on the one-sided attitude of the United States towards spheres of influence in view of their Latin American policies, in a talk to American critics of British actions in Greece in January 1945 (FO371/44555/AN370).

responsibility',[77] he was an excellent observer with an incisive knowledge of Greek politics.

The difficulty was one by no means restricted to Greek affairs. Roosevelt conducted most of his foreign diplomacy without reference to the State Department. To the extent that he had advisors, he relied on Hopkins and Leahy. Hull and Stettinius had little contact with him, and, it is suspected, had little influence when they did. Specialists in the State Department could write memoranda recommending courses of action and urge the Secretary of State to take them up with the President, but they were seldom successful. Under such circumstances, Roosevelt's lack of knowledge of specific problems, and probable lack of interest in many of them, meant that there was often no policy beyond generalities. This was certainly true of Greece during the war. If there is another factor, it is the general feeling in American circles that the country had nothing to gain or lose with regard to Greece; no desire to expand its connections; no fear that the country might fall into hostile hands.

This may explain American policy; but could another attitude have brought about a different result, or at least

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[77] Macmillan, in telegram 593, 13 December 1944, uses the term 'humourless pedant' but follows this by saying that MacVeagh was no fool, and praising him for supporting the idea of a regency (FO371/43698/R20779). Leeper, in a report of 26 July 1945 on all the diplomatic chiefs in Athens, was still smarting at MacVeagh's stringent neutrality in December 1944 (48441/R12555). In the following year, his successor took a much more generous view of MacVeagh's abilities, probably because American attitudes to Greece were changing (Post Report of 11 November 1946, 58953/R16822).

led to the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous nation without the suffering entailed by the civil war? American support for the idea of plebiscite and regency as set forth in the British plan of November 1943 might have weakened EAM´s position to the extent that the Government could have been established in Athens in December 1944 without difficulty. Full and public support by Roosevelt for this proposal, coupled with American participation in the liberation, might have put EAM in the awkward position of having to oppose both the United States and Great Britain. Such a situation might have changed the decision to begin the `Second Round´ of December 1944. Instead, the failure to take part in the military aspects of the return to Greece ensured that that country ended the war as a British sphere of influence.

American policies may well have reduced the chances of a peaceful liberation of Greece, but British policies were to a large extent responsible for the actual developments. If one unfortunate aspect of British attitudes to Greece can be singled out, it is the fact that for almost all of the wartime period, there were at least two, and usually three, British policies in existence at the same time. Procopis Papastratis, in his work on British policy towards Greece, concludes `The basic objective of British policy with regard to Greece before, during, and immediately after the Second World War was to restore, after the cessation of hostilities, Britain´s political influence in that country within

the wider south-east European perspective.[76] It is agreed that this was the Foreign Office policy, but that department often had to bow to the influence of others.

The British military, while no doubt wanting to ensure that Greece would be an ally of Britain in the post-war world, were more concerned that operations in Greece should support the war effort, either by cutting the German supply lines, or by tying down the largest possible numbers of German troops where they could not interfere with other operations. Their objectives clashed with those of the Foreign Office during much of 1943, but in 1944 they began to accept the danger of an over-powerful EAM, and were more worried about an attempted coup than the diplomats; their concern in the days before liberation was mainly for the safety of the British Liaison Officers. The third policy was that of Churchill, which, while accepting the desirability of the Foreign Office objectives, gave such stubborn support for the restoration of the King that it was very difficult to carry out logical plans.

While the Foreign Office objectives remained constant during the period, their policies for achieving them underwent a number of changes. Initially, in 1941-1942, there was an assumption that the King and his cabinet would be welcomed back in Greece as the legitimate government. Elections would be held and democracy would prevail, probably amounting to continuing rivalry between royalist and republican groups. While American observers felt that

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[76] *British Policy towards Greece*, p. 217.

the King had lost most of his popularity, the Foreign Office seems to have felt that his leadership against the Italians and the Germans guaranteed him continuing support after the war. The reports of the British Liaison Mission, together with information from escapees, gradually began to convince the British authorities in Cairo that there was little backing for the King within Greece. At the same time, it was established that the largest resistance movement, EAM, was communist dominated.

By late August 1943, these views were gradually being accepted within the Foreign Office, although Eden found it difficult to accept that it might not be possible to restore the King without a struggle. From this time on, there were continuous attempts to break the power of EAM and restore the popularity of the King. These efforts were impeded by military desires to maintain EAM as a weapon against the Germans, but the military objections were never allowed to interfere significantly with Foreign Office plans. This was because the military authorities began to realise that EAM was doing little to fight the Germans, but devoting its energies to destroying rival resistance groups, and possibly preparing for a revolt which would require strong British military forces to prevent.

The first major attempt to accomplish the Foreign Office objectives, the plan of November 1943, was thwarted by Roosevelt in Cairo, but Churchill's reluctance to press the plan contributed heavily to the failure. Further occasions during the spring and summer of 1944 to demand that the King agree to plebiscite and regency were never

seized upon with vigour or determination by Eden or Churchill. It was not until the last minute that Churchill prevailed on the King to remain abroad during the first phase of liberation. The negotiations which had brought EAM into the government in October 1944 were ruined by the failure of Churchill and Eden to solve the problem of the King before the return to Athens. The result was the civil war.

Eden's responsibility for this failure is not clear. He accepted the plan Leeper called his own in November 1943, and recommended it to Churchill, but it does not appear that he did enough to convince the Prime Minister of its merits. His failure to discuss it with him in Cairo before it was too late may have been the result of too much other business for both of them, but there does seem to be a reluctance to force the issue. Again, his failure to press the King to sign the constitutional act demanded by Tsouderos in April 1944 is another refusal to take definite action. It was only in September that Eden took a strong line with Churchill, and then only over the question of the King's return with the liberation forces. It must be accepted that Eden would have faced major opposition from Churchill if he had taken any stronger position at any time, but his comments on internal papers give rise to the that he was, at heart, hoping that by some miracle the King could be restored immediately and without difficulty.

There can be little doubt that Churchill, to the end, fought for the restoration of the King without qualifications. He never understood the amount of opposition to the

King within Greece, or the strength of the EAM. He was confident that the sight of the Union Jack and a few armoured cars would ensure that the Greek government would be installed in Athens without incident. His last-minute decision to restrain the King from returning with the troops seems based on the probable effect on outside public opinion of a restoration `on the point of British bayonets' rather than on the possibility of civil war.

It is too easy to criticise Churchill and Eden for what seem to be mistakes. Greece was a relatively minor area of difficulty in the midst of world-wide diplomatic and military problems. They had no way of knowing the real strength and intentions of EAM, nor any accurate measure of the support which would be available for the King or the Government upon its return. They were hampered by the scarcity of military resources and restrained by their alliance with the United States, whose attitude varied from indifference to opposition, so far as British efforts to solve the Greek problem were concerned. In the end, they brought about a reasonable solution, although at a considerable cost, both in casualties on both sides in the December uprising, and in world opinion.

Chapter VI

Political Guidance in the Post-War Period January 1945--February 1947

1. The Need for Political Guidance

Having saved Greece from the EAM, the British now had to try to save it from itself. The fighting stopped in January 1945, but the truce was only enforced by the British bayonets of the three divisions of troops which had been sent in to quell the Second Round. The Government was now in the hands of the Archbishop as Regent, but had to be reorganised on new lines if it was to survive. As the saviours of the nation and the guarantors of its safety, the British had to ensure that the new administration would establish law and order, rebuild the shattered economy, and conduct the plebiscite and elections promised by the Varkiza agreement. Failure in any of these tasks could lead to a revivial of EAM and a new left-wing revolt or a right-wing dictatorship.

Both the Churchill and Attlee Governments wished to allow the Greeks to proceed to reorganise and reconstruct the battered country with as little interference as possible, but the desperate economic situation, the reaction of a majority of the politically active against EAM, and the inability of Greek political leaders to submerge personal and factional rivalry made it necessary for the British to

provide economic and military support (discussed in the following chapter) and to intervene constantly in Greek political affairs.

In providing political guidance, the British found themselves caught between the desire to delay major political decisions until law and order could be reestablished and the memories of the civil war diminished, and the wishes of a majority of the Greek electorate at the time for right-wing government. The efforts to install administrations broadly representative of the entire political spectrum were frustrated; basically because they were unable to postpone the return of elected governments until stability returned. They were thus subject to criticism from both sides; for their attempts to delay the democratic process, and for their failure to prevent the installation of a right-wing government.

The hegemony of the right and the failure of measures to restore the economy, were responsible for the 'Third Round' of civil war beginning in the summer of 1946, which could lead to the conclusion that British policy in Greece for the two years after Varkiza was a failure. Given the United Kingdom's straightened financial situation in the period, and the failures of Greek political leaders to react effectively to the many problems, it is surprising that the British were able to maintain that stability which did continue until the American acceptance of responsibility. In these two years, the Americans maintained their policy of non-involvement, at least until the late autumn of 1946; even then their aid to Britain and the Greeks was minimal.

2. Churchill's Policy
January--August 1945

Churchill's initial instructions, only a few days after the King's appointment of Damaskinos, and even before a truce had been arranged, were to limit British involvement. He told Eden, `We do not wish to mix ourselves up too closely in the domestic affairs of Greece . . . . I conceive our policy in Greece to be purely military, namely, to hold the Attica region long enough for the Archbishop's Government to set up a military force to keep order and defend themselves . . . .'[1] Several months later when Leeper was being accused by American journalists in Athens for alleged interference in Greek affairs, Churchill advised the Ambassador to keep out of the detail of Greek politics.[2]

Shortly after the Varkiza agreement was signed, Macmillan and Leeper proposed that the Greek Government be required to sign an accord with Britain binding itself to observe a number of conditions, which came close to abandoning sovereignty. These included a pledge to discharge its responsibilities with impartiality until the elections; to select all ranks of the armed forces, provincial government representatives and civil servants without regard to political background; and to make arrests only in accordance with the Varkiza agreement (the new Greek Government was alleged

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[1]7 January 1945, FO954/11C.
[2]Leeper's telegram 995, 17 April, and Churchill's 970, 20 April, FO371/48266/R6914.

to have been arresting EAM supporters on trumped-up criminal charges). In return, Britain would increase the number of British troops to remain in Greece; provide equipment for expanded Greek armed forces and police; and supply an increased amount of relief stores. Their arguments were based on the view that public opinion both in the United Kingdom and in Greece would hold Britain responsible for the policies of a government which they had installed, and especially for the impartial implementation of the Varkiza agreement.

The reception in the Foreign Office was hostile. The Greeks might refuse to sign an agreement which would strip them of all real power and in effect establish a British protectorate; it might give the Soviets an excuse for similar arrangements in Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Sargent pointed out that Lord Cromer had never had a formal document in Egypt.[3] Eden agreed and forwarded the proposal to Churchill who echoed the Cromer analogy. The Prime Minister felt that the threat to withdraw the British troops was sufficient to control the Greek Government.[4]

Churchill discarded this rather simplistic attitude as it became evident that there would have to be continued interference in Greek politics. While there was much criticism in the Greek press of 'British intrigues', the Greek politicians continually manoeuvered for British

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[3]Telegrams 676 and 677, 5 March, and Foreign Office minutes, 6 and 7 March, FO371/48259/R4385. Lord Cromer was the British political agent in Egypt, 1883-1907, who was in all but name the governor of the country under British occupation.

[4]Minute, 11 March, FO954/11C.

support and were particularly happy to place responsiblity for the establishment of stability on London. A major factor was the frequent change in alignment in Greek political circles. Until January 1945, the Greek political spectrum was divided into the small group of supporters of the King; a broad centre of republicans; and the left of the Socialists and the Communists. From that time on, the centre, which might earlier have been expected to take control of the country in view of the general opposition to the King, lost ground.[5]

The events of December brought about a major shift in public opinion towards the right and the King. A number of political figures of the centre saw this trend and began to take advantage of it. Some felt that support of the King was what the British wanted and therefore necessary to retain British aid; others felt that joining the decisive swing to the right would be the best route to personal advancement. The politicians who did not move to the right were constantly forming temporary and shifting alliances with each other, or refusing to join in concerted efforts to achieve stability because of personal jealousies or self-interest. In this situation, it was impossible for the

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[5]Because Greek political parties (except for those of the far left) were constantly dividing and then forming new alliances, ususally in terms of support for leaders, rather than because of doctrinal changes, political matters will be discussed in terms of royalists, republicans, and the left, rather than using party names. Richard Clogg, *Parties and Elections in Greece* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988) provides a detailed account of the various parties and the changes amongst them.

British Government to remain aloof, and only a few weeks passed before definite interference was necessary.

The first action of Damaskinos upon his appointment as Regent was to require the resignation of Papandreou, which was fully supported by the British. Papandreou was replaced by General Plastiras. This appointment was the culmination of discussions within British circles, going back to 1943, of the idea of installing Plastiras in a position of leadership amongst the Greeks.[6] While these were never acted on, Plastiras was brought back from liberated France to Greece in December 1944, and took a leading part in the Boxing Day conference. He seems to have been respected then by all but the extreme right-wing: even EAM was reported to have felt he might be acceptable.[7]

The final decision to bring Plastiras to Greece stemmed from almost simultaneous initiatives of Eden and Papandreou. The day the EAM uprising began, Eden asked whether there should not be reconsideration of the idea, although it is not clear as to exactly what role Plastiras was expected to play. Two days later Leeper reported that Papandreou wanted Plastiras to become his Minister of War, presumably to put down the revolt. Action was taken immediately and Plastiras

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[6]The various discussions are noted in Chapter 2. SOE revived the idea in their letter to the Foreign Office, 22 July 1944, FO371/43733/R11589.

[7]*News-Chronicle*, 22 December 1944.

arrived in Athens on 13 December.[8] Within three weeks he was Prime Minister.

While there was something ironic in the titular head of EDES acting as the peacemaker between EAM and the royalists, the choice was logical for the moment. Plastiras was unquestionably a republican, yet he was willing to accept and support the King's regent, at least until the plebiscite. At the same time he was an ardent anti-communist. It was Leeper's intention to create a broad and moderate centre movement which would isolate both the extreme left and the extreme right. The initial cabinet included a wide range of politicians and gave rise to hopes that a stable government appealing to a substantial majority of the Greek people could be established.

Plastiras proved to have too little political acumen for such a difficult situation. As a republican, he was unhappy with the rapid and definite swing of public opinion to the royalists which the December uprising had brought about, but he tolerated the growing right-wing violence against the left.[9] In addition, he began filling posts in the civil administration and the armed forces with his own nominees, a matter which probably irritated the other

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[8]Eden's draft, about 4 December, Leeper's telegram 483 and Foreign Office telegram 374, both 6 December, FO371/43736/R19932 and R20100; and WM163(44)3, 11 December, CAB65/44.

[9]George Th. Mavrogordatos, "The 1946 Elections and Plebiscite," in *Greece in the 1940s*, ed. John O. Iatrides (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1981), pp. 181-194, provides a detailed examination of both right-wing and left-wing violence in this period, as does Richter, *British Intervention in Greece*, *passim*..

political figures in the Cabinet even more.[10] By late February it was evident that Plastiras would either have to be placed under firm control or be removed. He was replaced by a new `service´ government under Admiral Voulgaris, but the right-wing attacks on EAM and its supporters continued.

The difficulties of the Plastiras period were in part concerned with the question of the timing of the plebicsite and elections which had been promised in the Varkiza agreement. In that document the Greek Government pledged itself to hold the plebiscite before the end of 1945, and elections as soon as possible thereafter. Within a month, royalist factions were clamouring for an immediate plebiscite while public reaction to EAM was at its height.

Leeper feared that, while the King would be returned by an early vote, there would soon be a swing against him. This, in turn, would lead to more reliance on ultra-right wing movments in order to safeguard his throne. Leeper therefore wanted to postpone the plebiscite until more normal conditions prevailed.[11] Churchill reacted with a long and sarcastic minute to Eden:

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[10]Nigel Clive, ´British Policy Alternatives 1945-1946,´ in *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War*, ed. Lars Baerentzen, John O. Iatrides, and Ole L. Smith (Copenhagen: Museum Tuscalanum Press, 1987), pp. 41-43. Clive, a member of the British Embassy staff in Athens during the period, provides an informed summary of the political developments.

[11]Leeper´s telegrams 756, 793, and 794, 15 and 19 March, FO371/48260/R5105, R5267, and R5268.

Apparently Mr. Leeper's policy now is to delay the fair and free expression of the will of the Greek people, for fear they should vote for the return of the king, and thus get out of step with the general movement throughout the Balkans towards the Left.

. . . . . .

We must face the fact that the Greek proletariat, after the taste they have had of Communist brutalities, may wish to vote Conservative. This terrible prospect is not however incompatible with democracy, where the will of the people should be freely expresed. I recognise that it would be a pretty serious business if Conservative Governments were returned in Britain and in Greece by overwhelming majorities at about the same time.

He concluded: `The above is for your eyes alone, and should not be shown to the Republican Guard at the Foreign Office.'[12]

Eden, perhaps without consulting Churchill, told Leeper he agreed with the idea of postponement, so long as it was not for too long.[13] A few days later, Churchill sent the Foreign Secretary another minute covering the same ground as that quoted above, but without the sarcasm. This caused Eden to instruct Leeper to arrange the plebiscite within four months.[14] Within three weeks, Churchill, acting as Foreign Secretary during Eden's absence in the United States, reminded Leeper of the four-month deadline. Leeper replied that it would probably require five months to organise the administrative machinery and security for the voting. Churchill refused to accept this extension,[15] but

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[12]20 March, FO954/11C.

[13]Telegram 772, 25 March, PREM3 213/11.

[14]Churchill's minute, 29 March, and Eden's telegrams 812 and 883, 30 March and 6 April, FO371/48263/R5825, R5757, and R5989.

[15]Churchill's telegram 994, 22 April, and Leeper's 1046 and 1049, both 25 April, FO371/48267/R7055, R7408, and R7457.

there seems to have been no further action in setting a date until August, by which time Churchill was no longer in office.

3. The Development of the Decision to Hold the Election before the Plebiscite March-September 1945

In March 1945, Leeper reported that Damaskinos was suggesting that the elections to a Consituent Assembly should be held *before* the plebiscite. The Foreign Office expressed surprise at this idea, on grounds that they saw no chance of a stable govenment being established before a plebiscite.[15] For some time the question of the date of either vote was overshadowed, so far as the British were concerned, by matters such as the problem of maintaining the Voulgaris cabinet in office, although the question of whether the elections should precede the plebiscite was receiving considerable attention in Greek political circles.

The issue was raised anew by the Americans in July in connection with the question of foreign supervision of the elections. The original idea was that of MacVeagh, who, in the early days of the fighting in Athens, suggested that a three-power (Soviet, British and American) commission should be formed which would oversee a plebiscite, after the disorders had been put down. He felt that, if the British would accept such an plan, it would assure both sides of fair play and `restore confidence in British intentions

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[15]Leeper's telegram 850, 28 March, FO371/48263/R5825, and Foreign Office telegram 812, 30 March, PREM3 213/11.

which is now so sadly if unjustly lacking throughout the Greek world.´ MacVeagh sent this proposal to the State Department and the President, after discussing it with Leeper, who told him `that "similar thoughts have passed through his mind" which he is communicating to his Govern-ment´.[17]

The Department pointed out to Roosevelt that the British would probably veto Soviet participation in such an arrangement and the United States should not `intervene on a purely Anglo-American basis´. On the same day, Stettinius sent the President a memorandum on the Greek situation in which he mentioned that there were many public demands for `the establishment in Greece of a United States-Soviet-British Commission to assure fair play´.[18] Shortly after-ward, Eden remarked in the House of Commons `that "if our Allies will come and help" in organising free elections, "their help would be welcomed"´. The State Department then recommended that the United States should take part in a tri-partite commission if asked to do so.[19]

No definite action was to be taken on this recommenda-tion for six months, although it would seem that the British had some indication from sources within the State Department that the United States would participate.[20] They were

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[17]Telegram, 8 December, FRUS, 1944, V, 145; Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 659-662.

[18]Memoranda, both 13 December, FRUS, 1944, V, 148-150.
[19]406 *Parl. Deb.*, col. 1909, 20 December 1944; Kohler´s memorandum, 22 December, FRUS, 1944, V, 165; Murray´s memorandum, 6 January, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 99-101.

[20]FRUS, 1945, VIII, 128, n. 67.

perhaps relying on the Declaration of Liberated Europe signed at Yalta, which pledged the three powers to facilitate the holding of elections in countries newly freed from the Axis. The Americans made no specific announcements concerning Varkiza or Greek elections, but from the time of Yalta, the State Department was prepared to participate in the elections.[21] In mid-June, the British Embassy in Washington outlined the entire problem of the Greek elections to the State Department and followed up with a paraphrase of a Foreign office telegram which assumed that the Americans had agreed to participate in observing the elections. This led to a conference of senior officials and a formal recommendation to Truman, the new President, who agreed.[22]

In announcing the agreement, the Americans suggested that elections for a constituent assembly precede the plebiscite. This was described as an idea `which has been gaining popular approval in Greece and which has recently been subscribed to by the three EAM signers of the Varkiza Agreement´. They felt that the plebiscite should be delayed for about six months after the election so that the new

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[21]The State Department position after Yalta is set forth in its Briefing Book Paper, "Elections in Greece," FRUS, *Conference of Berlin (Potsdam)*, 1945, I, 653-654.

[22]British Aide-Memoire, 16 June, paraphrase of British telegram of 27 June, minutes of 29 June, and memorandum for the President, 4 July, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 126-131; Foreign Office telegram 6842, 27 June, FO371/48272/R10729.

government would have time to establish itself.[23] This point aroused objections from the Athens Embassy, who pointed out that it would violate the Varkiza agreement, to which the United States was not a party. Laskey, in the Foreign Office, felt the idea was inadvisable, but was worried about telling the Americans so, in case it gave them the idea that `we are contesting their view because it would mean delaying the king's return'. The strongest reaction came from Churchill, who found it to be contrary to all his correspondence with Roosevelt. He felt the object of the State Department paper was `to deny the Greek people a chance to say whether they will have the monarchy or not'.[24]

Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador, was directed to deliver a message from Eden concerning the Greek elections to Joseph Grew, acting for the new American Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes,[25] who was en route to Potsdam. Eden expressed strong opposition to holding the plebiscite after the election, on grounds that it would be unwarranted interference in Greek affairs, it would violate Varkiza, and the dangers the State Department foresaw might not come about. He suggested that the two votes might be taken on

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[23]Aide-Memoire, 5 July, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 132-133; Athens weekly summary, 17-24 June, FO371/48273/R1116; Athens telegrams 1567 and 1570, 21 July, 48275/R12346; Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, pp. 680-681.

[24]Washington telegram 4694, 6 July, and Athens telegram 1501, 7 July, FO371/48274/R11516, R11561; and MacVeagh's telegram, 9 July, FRUS, *Potsdam*, 1945, p. 659.

[25]James F. Byrnes (1879-1972), Congressman and Senator, 1911-1941; Supreme Court Justice, 1941-1942; Director of War Mobilisation, 1942-1945; Secretary of State, June 1945-January 1947.

the same day, but concluded that there was no need to decide the problem immediately. The contents of the message were forwarded to Byrnes at Potsdam, but there is no record of an American reaction.[26]

At the accession of the British Labour Party to power, Damaskinos asked the Athens Embassy to tell Ernest Bevin, the new Foreign Secretary, of the need for a definite decision concerning the elections and the plebiscite. His arguments were similar to those used by Leeper in March. An early plebisicite would return the King, but his popularity would soon decline. He would then have no alternative but to support an extreme right-wing government. This would drive the centre parties into the arms of the communists, and civil war would ensue. Early elections on the other hand would lead to a broadly representative government which would be strong enough to rebuild the economy and establish stability.[27]

The message was well timed. A week or so before, the Foreign Office had prepared a lengthy memorandum for Bevin to summarise the situation in Greece, and the `basic principles which have hitherto detemined our policy towards Greece'. This constitutes the first detailed statement found of British policy towards Greece after the liberation. The most important principle was `that we require a stable

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[26]Grew's memorandum of his conversation with Halifax, 10 July; and paraphrase of Eden's telegram (7313 in FO371/48274/R11561) of 9 July, FRUS, *Potsdam*, 1945, pp. 660-661.

[27]Letter of Harold Caccia (Charge d'Affaires in Leeper's absence), 14 August, FO371/48277/R14008.

and pro-British government in Greece and the sincere friendship of the Greek people if we are to maintain our political and military position in the Eastern Mediterranean and to safeguard our lines of communication with the East'. This could be achieved if `we can promote the formation of a government which represents the will of the Greek people', since the majority of the Greek people were `fervently and genuinely pro-British'.

There were other reasons which made it necessary for Britain to undertake responsibility in Greece. The Greeks could not be left to fend for themselves in view of the economic chaos which the war had brought. Firm guidance would be necessary if the country was not to slip into anarchy or dictatorship. `The Greeks had never yet made a success of democracy.'

The memorandum included a detailed discussion of the problems involved with the preparations and scheduling of the elections and the plebiscite. The arguments for and against holding the elections first were rehearsed, and mention was made of the American suggestion to hold the plebiscite six months after the elections for the assembly. The Foreign Office saw much merit in this view, but there was some doubt that elections could produce a stable government if the King's future was not yet settled. Up to this point it had been accepted that this was a question which the Greeks themselves should settle; the Foreign Office had attempted to `restrain the U.S. Government from offering any premature advice'.

No recommendations were made, but it was concluded that several decisions would have to be made by the Foreign Secretary or the Cabinet. The first was that of whether or not to maintain the Regent and the existing Government. If it was decided to do so, elections should be held as soon as possible. A decision was also required concerning the order in which the plebiscite and the parliamentary election should be held. The initial draft expressed the view that the best solution would be for the election to come first, followed closely by the plebiscite, but this was changed by a hand-written amendment to the effect that `our present view is that the Varkiza Agreement should be maintained'.[24]

Presumably on the basis of this memorandum, Bevin recommended to the Cabinet that the elections and the plebsicite be held as soon as possible. It would be preferable to hold the elections first, but this decision should be made by the Greeks. Damaskinos and the existing government should be maintained, but action must be taken by the Greeks to meet the criticism of the left concerning violence and repression. The Cabinet approved the recommendations three days later.[25]

On the same day his paper was sent to the Cabinet, Bevin sent a message to the British Embassy in Washington for discussion with the State Department. He attached importance to the Varkiza agreement and felt that any amendment to it should be made by the Greeks in order that

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[24]Draft of 5 August or earlier, FO371/48276/R13143.

[25]CP(45)107, 11 August, CAB129/1; CM21(45), 14 August, CAB128/1.

they take full responsiblity. Even so, he ~~preferred~~ preferred to hold the election before the plebiscite, although he did not agree with the American proposal for a six-months hiatus between the two. The British and American Ambassadors in Athens should tell the Regent in strict confidence that the elections should be held first with the plebiscite to follow within two months. He included a summary of the paper sent to the Cabinet, with added emphasis on the British desire for American cooperation on Greek matters. The State Department informally agreed to have the American representative in Athens discuss with Damaskinos the possibility of holding the elections before the plebiscite (nothing was said about changing the interval from six month to two).[30]

The British intended not to offer advice on the exact timing or order until Damaskinos could visit London, but the State Department now became impatient, entirely for administrative reasons. Arrangements had already been made to organise the American election observer commission, using U.S. military personnel from Germany who would only be available if the operation began by 1 December. They therefore wanted an immediate decision as to the date of the election, and, in particular, desired as short an interval as possible between elections and plebiscite, to avoid retaining the commission in idleness or sending a second group later.

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[30]Paraphrase of Foreign Office telegram of 11 August, memorandum of conversation, 13 August, and British Embassy note, 18 August, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 136-139, 144-145.

MacVeagh, on instructions from Washington, joined Harold Caccia (British Charge d´Affaires in Athens in Leeper´s absence in London) in lengthy discussion with Damaskinos in an effort to establish a date for the elections. This resulted only in the Regent´s statement that elections could probably be held by late December or early January, but the plebiscite should be postponed for a long period; according to Caccia´s report, from three to five years. Such a lengthy delay would force the right, centre, and left to join together and produce a stable government.[31]

Leeper joined Sargent and Hayter, the head of the Southern Department, to discuss this idea. They concluded that the postponement of the plebiscite would result in a `pro-British vote´ in the parliamentary elections which would defeat the rightists. This would force republicans and royalists to join together to form a stable government, unless the King repudiated the Regency. In the latter case, the royalists might attempt a coup. The Foreign Office view was passed to Byrnes (then in London) with a request for American comments.[32]

Damaskinos arrived in London a few days later and presented his plan both to the Foreign Office and to Byrnes. Byrnes, after talking to Damaskinos, informed his deputy that he would accepted the postponement of the plebiscite,

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[31]State Department telegram, 1 September, and MacVeagh´s telegrams, 3 and 5 September, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 150-154; Athens telegram 1830, 5 September, FO371/48279/R15270.

[32]Laskey´s minute, 6 September, FO371/48279/R15270; memorandum, 11 September, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 155-156.

but not for as long as three years. Several days later, Bevin, who had been too busy with the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting to discuss the matter in detail with the Regent, told Byrnes that he agreed to the postponement. Byrnes was willing to accept joint responsibility for what amounted to major interference in Greek affairs, although he would not agree to a three-year delay.[33] Bevin finally agreed to make a public recommendation for an early election and an appreciable, but undefined, postponement of the the plebiscite.

Before an announcement could be made the King's approval would be required to prolong the regency. The King refused Damaskinos' first entreaties, but finally agreed 'under pressure' to the postponement of the plebiscite, when faced with the joint decision of Bevin and Byrnes.[34] On 19 September, a joint British, American, and French official communique was issued, stating that the three governments hoped that elections for an assembly could be held before the end of the year. These should provide a basis upon

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[33]Byrnes' memorandum, 13 September, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 157; Sargent's minute, 10 September, FO371/48279/R15578; Hayter's minute, 14 September, and report of Bevin/Byrnes meeting, 15 September, 48280/R16291 and R16292.

[34]Memorandum of conversation of King and Damaskinos, 13 September, FO371/48280/R16291; Winant's telegram, 19 September, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 159.

which a stable government could be formed. Only then could a `free and genuine´ plebiscite be held.[35]

The King immediately wrote to Bevin, Byrnes, and the French Foreign Minister, Bidault, complaining that neither he nor the Archbishop had been been consulted. This is inconsistent with the record of Damaskinos´ two meetings with him, as well as the several conferences of Damaskinos with Bevin and company, but not untypical of the King. He pointed out that the new arrangement violated the provisions of Varkiza as well as the Royal Act of 29 December 1944, i.e., his agreement to appoint Damaskinos as Regent. He emphasised that the latter document had been signed on the advice of the British Government, a polite version of the pressure Churchill and Eden had exerted that night. He feared that the reversal of the order of voting would exacerbate the instability and lead to further violence. Even so, he would not create any difficulties in what he termed ´this new policy of the Allies´. Bevin thanked the King for his promise not to create any difficulties, but assured him that he was confident the three-power declaration on the order of the voting was in the best interests of Greece. Byrnes sent a similar reply.[36]

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[35]Telegram from Byrnes´ Special Assistant, 19 September, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 158-159. The French were included, since they had already been invited to join the commission to observe the elections. The Soviets had been asked to join, but declined.

[36]George II to Byrnes, 22 September; Bevin´s letter to Byrnes, 29 September; and Byrnes letter to the King, 1 October, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 160-161, 165-167.

4. Intervention to Avoid Economic Collapse; the Postponement of the Plebiscite September 1945-March 1946

Leeper and Damaskinos returned to Athens to find that the three-power declaration had had little effect on progress towards political unity. The King's popularity remained high; the republicans still wanted to delay voting. Voulgaris, no doubt at the urging of Damaskinos, announced that the election would be held on 20 January 1946, with the plebiscite to follow at an unspecified date. The non-royalist parties, the liberals, socialists, and communists, immediately announced that they would abstain from the election. Faced with this seemingly insurmountable problem, Voulgaris and his service government resigned.[37]

Leeper recommended that Damaskinos attempt to form a republican administration, but the Regent felt that a royalist government would be best, since it would seem to represent a majority view. Leeper asked Bevin to intervene, but the Foreign Secretary felt he had already involved himself enough in Greek politics. He was annoyed at Leeper's implication that it was the duty of the British to tell the Greeks how to run their affairs. Hayter added his own objections to the way Leeper was appearing to be 'turning Greece into a second Egypt'. While Leeper and his staff felt that London did not understand the Greek situation, they followed orders and told Damaskinos the problem

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[37]MacVeagh's telegrams, 4-9 October, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 167-172; Leeper's telegrams 1949, 2027, 2050, and 2058, 23 September, 3, 6, 7, and 9 October, FO371/48280/R16280; 48282/R16948, R17077, R17083, and R17193.

was his to solve. While Damaskinos tried in vain to form a coalition, Leeper asked London to be released from the non-intervention instruction, without success.[34]

Bevin did assure Damaskinos that British troops would put down any revolt, whether from left or right, and added that he would consider the postponement of the elections until the following spring when conditions might encourage the republicans to join in a broad government. Hector McNeil, the Parliamentary Secretary at the Foreign Office, made a similar statement in the House of Commons, mentioning that the British Government would accept an election date of mid-May. Privately, Bevin told Leeper that he rejected the idea of a royalist government; he had expected Damaskinos to appoint a centre-left administration. His words were `The only reason for forming [a royalist government] would be the danger of royalist disturbances if a contrary decision is taken'.[35]

Leeper renewed his request to intervene on 30 October, causing Bevin to tell Hayter: `My difficulty with Greece is that I do not know what advice Leeper would tender.' Hayter concurred, but it was decided to try to restore the prestige

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[34]MacVeagh's telegrams, 11 and 16 October, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 172-173; Leeper's telegrams 2062, 2063, 2064, and 2075, Foreign Office telegram 2062, 9 October, Hayter's letter, 10 October, and Lascelles' letter, 11 October, FO371/48282/R17131, R17132; 48283/R17309; 48452/R17101, R20925.

[35]MacVeagh's telegrams, 16 and 17 October, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 173-174; Leeper's telegram 2091, 13 October, and Bevin's telegram 2139, 20 October, FO371/48283/R18206, and R18452; and 414 *Parl. Deb.*, cols. 1641-1648, 19 October.

of the Regent by publishing Bevin's message concerning postponement of the elections until spring.[40] Damaskinos finally tried, and failed, to form an all-republican government. Leeper asked London again for permission to intervene, and on 1 November, Bevin forwarded a firm set of suggestions for the Regent. His Majesty's Government would prefer a fully representative government, but accepted that this was impossible in view of the royalists' refusal to participate. Therefore, Damaskinos should appoint his own candidate with as broad a government as possible. He should not worry about right-wing criticism. As an incentive, Hector McNeil would be sent to Athens to investigate the need for economic aid.[41]

Before these instructions reached Athens, Damaskinos had appointed a new government, with Panayotis Kannellopoulos as Prime Minister. It was made up mainly of conservative republicans, and seems to have satisfied no one. The new Premier displeased the royalists by refusing to commit himself on a date for the elections; the republicans not represented in the government accused him of cooperating too closely with the right. His entry into office coincided with a drastic weakening of the economic situation which emphasised the need for a strong leader.

The seriousness of the economic situation combined with the failure of the government to make any progress on

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[40]Leeper's telegram 2139, 30 October, Hayter's minute, 31 October, and Foreign Office telegram 2218, 31 October, FO371/48283/R18452.

[41]Leeper's telegram 2199 and Bevin's telegram, both 1 November, FO371/48284/R18571.

political problems resulted in Bevin's decision to send McNeil to Athens immediately. The envoy was instructed, with Cabinet approval, to tell the government to rid the army of right-wing extremists, set a date for the election, and ensure that the electoral roles were accurate. In return, the British would send an economic mission to Greece to help the administration to tackle the economy.[42]

McNeil relayed Bevin's message, but was immediately faced with objections. Kannellopoulos stressed the need for economic aid, but felt the Greek people would not accept a mission which might dictate to the Greek Government. At the same time, he wanted a definite statement from the British Government that the Greek politicians should agree to a long postponement of the plebisicite. At a sumptuous banquet given for McNeil by the Greeks, who had equated his arrival with a major reconstruction loan, the British envoy shocked the company by announcing that there would be no additional economic aid.[43]

This resulted in a financial panic. Damaskinos decided to dismiss Kannellopoulos and attempt to form a government uniting all parties. To do this, he would announce that the plebisicite was postponed for three years, since he felt that this was the significant issue. He asked that Bevin support this delay, should the King object, a request which

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[42]CP(45)266, 3 November, CAB129/4; CM(45)49th, 6 November, CAB128/2.

[43]Minutes of the conferences in Athens, 14-22 November, FO371/48285/R19825, R19828, and R19830, 48286/R20169; 48416/R21248 and R21249; and MacVeagh's telegram, 17 November, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 270-271.

Leeper and McNeil approved on grounds that it was the only way in which chaos could be avoided. Bevin refused to bow to pressure. On 17 November, he told McNeil: `I cannot be a party to further manoeuverings about dates of elections and plebiscites, and I cannot give any backing as suggested [by you]. It would just be buying a pig in a poke. What I want is a Government capable of reconstructing Greece.´ He demanded that the Greek Government begin a programme of reconstruction in accordance with the advice of the new economic mission. The parties should be told that the elections would take place by 31 March 1946, and the plebiscite in March 1948. If these conditions were not met, there was a direct threat of the loss of British support.[44]

Damaskinos pointed out to Leeper that the execution of the terms of this ultimatum would only result in a refusal of the royalists to cooperate, so that he would have to appoint a purely republican government. This government would be unable to cope with the financial crisis, so that the republicans would lose the election. Leeper felt that the current enthusiasm for the royalists was based on either fear of the communists or opportunism, and was only temporary. In his view, a republican government for the months up to the end of March would ensure the defeat of the royalists

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[44]McNeil´s telegram 2298, 16 November, and Bevin´s telegrams 2336 and 2339, 17 and 18 November, FO371/48337/19561 and 48285/R19555.

in the election, so long as Greece was given substantial British economic aid.[45]

Damaskinos presented Bevin's terms to the leaders of the political parties (except for the KKE), and, with McNeil's approval, stated that acceptance of these terms would ensure that Greece received some economic aid. All the republican leaders accepted this programme, but the royalists refused. Damaskinos thereupon gave Sophoulis, the Liberal leader, the task of forming a new government. Despite the complete acceptance by republican politicians of Bevin's requirements, several of them refused to join the new Cabinet, either because of personal animosities or, perhaps, for opportunistic reasons, i.e., the possibility of preferment under a royalist administration. Damaskinos thereupon announced his intention of resigning the regency. This was a serious matter, since the King would be apt to accept the resignation, abolish the regency, and appoint a royalist government.[46]

Despite McNeil's initial insistence that no financial aid would be forthcoming, limited funds were made available for currency stabilisation funds, and a renunciation of earlier Greek debts was arranged. These two grants were coupled with requirements for economic and financial reforms on the part of the Greeks. More or less simultaneously, the

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[45]Minutes of meetings, 19 November, FO371/48286/R20281; and 48338/R20282.

[46]Leeper/McNeil telegrams 2323, 2339, 2340, 2344, and 2390, 20, 22, and 28 November, FO371/48285/R19654, R19793, R19780, R19794, and 48286/R20090; and MacVeagh's telegrams, 20, 22, and 23 November, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 178-183.

American Government, arranged a reconstruction credit of twenty five million dollars, accompanied by firm urgings for drastic changes. As will be seen, neither effort had long-term effect on the deteriorating situation.[47]

The King issued a public statement almost as soon as he heard that Sophoulis had been asked to form a new administration, stating that `The postponement of the plebisicite in Greece for three years accompanied by the formation of a one-party government creates an entirely new situation.' He went on to stress the points he had made in his letter to the three Foreign Ministers the month before concerning the violation of the Varkiza Agreement and the circumstances under which he had been pressed to appoint the Regent, as well as the view that this action was stifling the sentiments of the Greek people. The King concluded with the statement: `So far as I am concerned the repudiation of every decision that has so far been taken compels me to regulate my future attitude without any reservation other than the interests of my people and the respect of its sovereign will.'

The Foreign Office told the King that he was in error concerning plans for the plebiscite, and disagreed with his analysis.[48] Apparently no notice was taken of the withdrawal of the promise of the month before to create no

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[47]Details of the financial aid are provided in Chapter VII.

[48]King's public statement, 21 November, his written memorandum, 20 November, and the Foreign Office reply, FO371/48285/R19838; and further Foreign Office comments, Winant's telegram, 22 November, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 181-182.

difficulties despite his objections to the ~~the~~ three-power declaration concerning the plebiscite. Left-wing and centre circles in Greece regarded the statement by the King as an incitement to civil war, but Leeper was assured by Greek military and police authorities that there was no liklihood of an attempted coup ~~against~~ against a government supported by the British `in the absence of any indication of support by other Allies'.[48]

The publication of the King's statement led to a question by Eden in the House of Commons. Bevin, in reply, pointed out the King's errors and explained the background and contents of the ultimatum of 17 November. Churchill intervened to point out that the postponement of the plebscite was not in keeping with `the pledges and understandings we have given, not only to the King but to the Greek people, with whom it is a burning question.' Bevin pointed out that he had been in Cabinet, but did not remember any mention of a date.

Bevin also pointed out that he had defended Churchill's actions in Greece in December 1944 in a speech to the Labour Party Conference on the 13th of that month. He quoted a portion of that speech to the effect that he had said the plebiscite should follow a fair election. Until recently, he had never tried to implement this view, but had done his best to follow the Varkiza Agreement. He justified his return to the idea of holding the election first on grounds that `If I forced this issue of the institutional question

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[48]MacVeagh's telegram, 22 November, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 182.

before I got tranquility in the country, I should run the danger of civil war, disturbance, and economic disaster, and, God knows, Greece has had enough of that.' A few days later Churchill wrote to Bevin, saying that he still felt holding the plebiscite first would remove the issue of the monarchy from the election campaign. A lengthy answer was prepared, but Bevin saw Churchill privately instead.[50]

Two weeks later, the King visited Bevin and provided a lengthy memorandum of complaints. He reviewed the development of Greek politics since Varkiza, placing major blame on the British support of Plastiras. Had this arch-republican, as the King viewed him, not been appointed, it would have been possible to arrange collaboration between republicans and royalists while communism was the common threat. He recommended that the British re-institute a service government and conduct the elections and plebiscite without delay. After arguments by Bevin, the King agreed to accept the idea of the election first, but maintained his objections to a postponement of the plebiscite.[51]

The British were worried by Damaskinos' refusal to withdraw his decision to resign. Bevin made a personal appeal to him to remain, to which Leeper added his own urgings. These had no effect, but the Regent did express to Leeper `a willingness to reconsider if MacVeagh made a

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[50]416 *Parl. Deb.*, cols. 618, and 767-770, 22 and 23 November; Churchill letter to Bevin, draft reply and mention of the private meeting of which no details are given, FO371/48287/R20548.

[51]Foreign Office minute, 5 December, recording Bevin's meeting with the King on 3 December, and the King's memorandum, FO371/48287/R20745, R20769.

personal request'. Leeper found the American Ambassador at the hospital bedside of his wife, and rushed him to the Archepiscopal palace. MacVeagh, without consulting the State Department, urged him to withdraw his resignation. His major argument was the probable effect on American opinion, which may have been taken (and may have been intended) as a subtle hint that American aid might be forthcoming. Damaskinos agreed to stay in office, after being assured that he could quote MacVeagh's advice in a public statement. This, while mentioning Leeper's urgings and Bevin's message, began with `His Excellency, the Ambassador of the United States, . . .' and clearly implied that the Regent had changed his mind only because of the American intervention. MacVeagh was complimented by Washington on his action.[52]

5. The Election of March 1946

On 29 November, the American and British heads of the Allied Mission for the Observation of the Greek Elections (AMFOGE) arrived in Athens and were told by Sophoulis that the election would be held in March; a few days later he

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[52]MacVeagh's telegrams, 23 and 26 November, and State Department telegram, 28 November, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 182-184; Foreign Office telegram 2363, 22 November, and Leeper's telegrams 2349, 2350, and 2352, all 23 November, FO371/48285/R19846, R19847, R19854, and R19855; and Leeper's telegrams 2374 and 2376, 25 November, 48286/R19927.

publicly announced that it would take place on 31 March.[53] For the next four months, almost to the day of the election, there were attempts from within and without the government to postpone it. In retrospect, these efforts seem non-sensical, since the usual demand was for only a two week delay.[54] The matter came to a head in February, when Sophoulis convinced Leeper that a two month delay was necessary. Bevin, troubled by ~~with~~ Soviet criticism in the United Nations Security Council over the continued presence of British troops in Greece, sent a strong message to Leeper saying he would never consent to such a proposal and that he hoped the issue would never be raised again.[55]

Even so, the demands for delays continued up until the week before the election. In early March, the State Department formed the view that the majority of the Greek people wanted the elections on schedule. On 2 March, the American Charge d'Affaires in Athens was instructed to tell the Greek Foreign Minister that the Americans hoped rumours that the elections would be postponed were incorrect. He was to point out that the United States felt that any delay would hamper Greek rehabilitation and that it would be

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[53]MacVeagh's telegram, 4 December, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 185-186.

[54]AMFOGE report, 10 December, FO371/48288/R21275; MacVeagh's telegrams 4, 7, and 8 December, Greek Embassy letters, 6 and 10 December, Byrnes letters, 11 December and 7 January, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 185-193.

[55]Leeper's telegrams 253, 254, and 282, 5, 7 and 10 February, FO371/58673/R1905 and R1906, and 58674/R2192; Foreign Office telegram 226, 8 February, 58673/R1905; Sophoulis message, 15 February, and Foreign Office minutes, 15 and 16 February, 58675/R2633 and R2634.

difficult for the Americans to hold their election observers in Greece for any longer period. The State Department's instructions were conveyed to Christopher Warner of the Foreign Office, who reported them to the British Embassy in Athens with the comment: `This shows a most welcome and unexpected initiative on the part of the United States Government.' He went so far as to send the U.S. Embassy a letter of thanks for the support.[56]

In the meantime, Rankin, the American Charge in Athens, and Henry Grady, the head of the American election mission, held up the message, on grounds that it would reinforce the claims of the left-wing in Greece that the Allies were forcing premature elections. They suggested that Byrnes make a press statement instead, stressing the administrative difficulties of retaining the mission in Greece. Instead, on 19 March, Byrnes made a press statement, saying only that the United States hoped the elections would be held at the earliest practicable date, but the timing was entirely up to the Greek Government.[57]

Grady then pointed out that Byrnes' press statement was being interpreted in Athens as meaning that the Americans were `not unsympathetic to postponement'. The British Embassy in Washington delivered an Aide Memoire to the State

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[56]London Embassy telegram, 27 February, Athens Embassy telegram, 2 March, Bevin message to Sophoulis, 7 March, FRUS, 1946, VII, 115-118; London Embassy conversations with the Foreign Office, 4 March, Foreign office telegram to Athens, 6 March, and thank you letter, 12 March, FO371/58678/R3567.

[57]Rankin's telegrams, 8 and 11 March, and State Department telegrams, 14 and 19 March, FRUS, 1946, VII, 118-122.

Department, which, in an air of thinly veiled disappointment, thanked them for a copy of Byrnes' statement. The note continued by urging that the American Embassy in Athens comply with their original instructions of 2 March to urge the Greek Government to adhere to the date of 31 March. The same day, the Foreign Office issued a strong public statement to the effect that His Majesty's Government did not take the view that the state of security in Greece would improve if the election was postponed. The Greek people, parties,and press should use all their power and influence to obtain an overwhelming poll on 31 March.[58]

Perhaps as the result of Grady's comments or the Foreign Office statement, Byrnes authorised Grady to give Sophoulis a copy of Byrnes' press statment, along with an oral statement that the United States hoped there would be no postponement; the main grounds being a fear for the effect on the economy.[59] This episode can have had little effect on Greek political affairs, but it is illustrative of how little understanding Byrnes and his close advisors had of Greek affairs, and, probably, how little real attention they were paying to them at this time.

The election was held as scheduled on 31 March. The result was a definite victory for the royalists, with 65% of the valid votes; the remainder went to the republican and other centre parties. The Communist and Socialist Parties

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[58]Grady telegram and British Aide-Memoire, both 20 March, FRUS, 1946, VII, 123-125; *The Times*, 21 March.

[59]State Department telegrams, 21 and 22 March, FRUS, 1946, VII, 126-127.

in mid-February had decided to boycott the elections. This gave rise to a never-ending argument that the election results were unrepresentative, but it is difficult to imagine that the participation of the far left, even in coalition with the centre, would have prevented a royalist victory. The three-power allied commission which observed the elections reported that they were, with minor exceptions, fair and honest. The results were completely consistent with forecasts made by most Greek politicians and British officials.[60]

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[60]Mavrogordatos, 'The 1946 Elections and Plebiscite,' and Richter, *British Intervention in Greece*, pp. 441-451, both conclude that the elections was far less fair and honest than the AMFOGE report indicated, but neither estimate the effect of the illegalities involved on the actual outcome. Both believe that the results would have been inconclusive had the two left-wing parties participated. The AMFOGE Report suggests that there would still have been a royalist victory.

6. British Policy from Varkiza to the Election January 1945--March 1946

Whether the British were wrong to refuse to condone a delay for the election cannot be determined; it seems doubtful that a postponement for two or three months would have resulted in any significant swing to the centre. Such a delay would have meant even greater deterioration of stability and of the economy. The major argument was that a government reflecting the will of the people might be more decisive and better able to cope with the situation, espceially if, as was hoped, it comprised a broad selection of political parties. Even if it did not, an elected government should be more effective that the appointed interim arrangement, an argument which was not borne out by the royalist administration which did come to power. Postponement of the plebiscite until the reaction to EAM diminished might result in a more genuine expression of the will of the people with respect to the monarchy.

At the same time, the right-wing violence which continued for most of the period might have resulted in large-scale intimidation of voters; it was not illogical to consider the possibility of EAM attempts to interfere with the electoral process. It would be highly advantageous if the election could be held before the British troops were withdrawn from Greece, an action which was expected to take place within a few months of Varkiza. This factor lost its importance after it was decided to maintain a sizable British garrison in Greece at least until the election and plebiscite had taken place.

British actions from Varkiza to the election of March 1946 involved a number of contradictions. There was no clear concept of the problems which had arisen from the civil war. To the extent that there was a policy in January 1945, it was that of Churchill to remain aloof from Greek internal affairs as much as possible, to retain a British military presence until the Greek Government was able to restore law and order, and to encourage the Greeks to establish a stable political system for the future.

The Foreign Office generally accepted this view and hoped that the political leaders would join together in the wake of the attempted Communist take-over and establish a

government of national unity, or at least, a roughly two-party political system in which the moderate right would alternate with the centre and moderate left. The King might or might not return, depending on the results of the promised plebiscite, although, in view of the opposition to the King during the occupation, it was more likely that Greece would become a republic. Churchill, always the supporter of the monarchy, wished for the return of the King, and a conservative government, preferably with the consent of the majority. In Athens, Leeper recognised the goals of the Foreign Office, but was far more aware that Greek politicians had little hope of achieving them, without strong guidance from the British.

There were several factors which were not evident in early 1945. There was the massive swing of public opinion from opposition to the King to strong support for him and for the right wing political movements. The communist-led revolt of December 1944 caused a reaction which was not limited to an abhorance of the left, but a shift far across the political spectrum. The volatility which always characterised Greek politics accounts for much of the movement, but there was also a feeling that Britain favoured the King, and it would therefore be in the best interests of Greece to please the British.

A second factor was the right-wing campaign of terror and violence against those who had supported EAM. This saw the formation of such groups as `X´, the use of ex-Security Battalion personnel in the ranks of the Government police and military forces, large-scale imprisonment without trial

of left-wing suspects, and a general violation of many of the provisions of the Varkiza agreement.[61] The toleration and often acceptance of such illegal actions by the right wing political parties did much to bring down the original government of national unity under Plastiras, and made it almost impossible for the formation later of a broad and effective government before the election.

The Foreign Office policy of forming a broadly based government to restore law and order came close to violating the principles of democracy. If it is accepted that these principles implied that the interim government should be the one which best represented the wishes of the majority of the people, it follows that a right-wing administration should have been installed. Unfortunately, a Greek right-wing at this stage would no doubt continue to condone the violence against the left, fill the ranks of the army and the police with its followers, and use its position to ensure that it won the election when it came.

The importance of the timing and relative order of the election and plebiscite was a third factor not recognised at the time of Varkiza. That agreement called for both to be held during 1945, with the plebiscite to be followed as soon as possible by the election. When the agreement was signed, it is probable that both the communists and the republicans believed that the plebiscite would result in the rejection

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[61]This is not to imply that there were not violations of Varkiza by EAM, in matters such as the failure to surrender arms, and, in some areas, terror against the right. Some details of the extent of left-wing violence are discussed in Mavrogordatos, 'The 1946 Elections and Plebiscite.'

of the King. All groups seem to have expected the election to result in a broadly representative new assembly, in which the communists would have a significant if relatively minor position. This was the basis for Leeper's early attempts to form and maintain a broadly-based interim government.

The British could feel justified in such attempts, in the long-term interests of Greece. They expected that, as time went on, the reaction to the events of December would wear off, and the Greek people could make their decisions as to their government and the question of the King in a more rational atmosphere. In addition, until some degree of law and order was restored and the election was held, they could not be positive that the majority did support the right. Even Churchill did not attempt to introduce a right-wing government, although he pressed for the plebiscite and election at the earliest possible moment, in the belief that the sooner they were held the more likely was a right-wing triumph.

Once it was evident that there was a major shift to the King and the right-wing, the British needed to consider a new policy for the timing and relative order of the two polls. Churchill definitely wanted an early plebiscite with the election soon afterward. He was not bothered by the possibility that an early vote on the King might not reflect the real desires of the Greek people, or that the King's return might mean the use of his influence to establish a right-wing, but unrepresentative government. He was unable to implement his views before leaving office, due to the very real difficulties of restoring stability, and the time

necessary for preparing new electoral registers and the machinery for the elections themselves.

Leeper and the Foreign Office felt strongly that the popularity of the King and the right-wing was a temporary phenomenon. If the royalists were given power, there would soon come a time when popular opinion would change substantially and lead to strong oppositon, if not civil war. Adding to this the failure of the interim governments to establish law and order, particularly in terms of putting down right-wing extremism, there seemed to be good reason to postpone the plebiscite and election.

There was a significant change in British policy coincident with the ascension to power of the British Labour Party. With Churchill's departure, there was no longer significant British support for the King and the royalists. There was now a united British policy for the establishment of a broadly based coalition, regardless of the state of public opinion. At the same time, there was agreement, strongly supported by Damaskinos and Byrnes, that the plebiscite should be postponed until after the election; the only question was for how long.

This new policy was a violation of the Varkiza Agreement, and seemingly undemocratic. It was based on the view that it would be best for Greece in that a non-royalist interim government might provide more stability and reduce the incidence of violence and terrorism, so that the eventual elections would be more truly representative. As far as the Varkiza Agrement was concerned, EAM was only too happy to accept the postponement of the election and the

plebiscite, since their only hope of gaining some share of political power rested on delay. The matter raises two questions. First, was the British Government justified in ignoring the current strength of the right-wing on grounds that it did not really reflect the long-term interests of the Greek people, or that a right-wing government, even if popularly elected, would lead Greece to disaster? It could be argued that, without firm evidence of the strength of royalist feeling, it would be fairer and perhaps even more in keeping with democratic ideals to maintain an interim government in which most parties were represented, regardless of their relative strength.

Secondly, did Bevin support Leeper and the Foreign Office in their attempts to establish and maintain broad-based governments because he considered this the best course of action for Greece in the long run, or was it a matter of opposing right-wing political groups--or even an instance of introducing `Socialist foreign policy´? The latter view seems far-fetched, in the absence of any evidence in its favour. Bevin seems to have been following the course which the Foreign Office had already charted, accepting their appreciation of the situation and the probable effects of early elections. The only decision which really amounted to a reversal of Foreign Office views was that to postpone the plebiscite until after the election, a matter on which the Foreign Office had had trouble making up its mind.

7. American Policy from Varkiza to the Election January 1945--March 1946

American policy during this period remained one of friendship towards Greece and a reluctance become involved in internal Greek affairs. This was a continuation of the view that Greece was of little interest to the United States, and, in any case, a British problem. MacVeagh maintained a close watch on the political developments and discussed them frequently with the British diplomats in Athens, sometimes offering comment, but, to their irritation, often concluding with, `But this is your Third International, not ours.' The Foreign Office echoed this complaint, in saying that the usual State Department reply to any approach for help with regard to Greece was `Greece is <u>your</u> headache'.[52]

To the extent that the State Department had a definite policy towards Greece, it was that contained in a briefing paper prepared for Truman prior to the Potsdam Conference. Its opening sentence implied a major change of American policy: `To take an active and benevolent interest in Greece at this time offers one of the most practical means of ~~demonstating~~ demonstrating this Government's determination to play an international role commensurate with its strength and public committments.' After accepting that Greece had been

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[52]Caccia's telegram 1671, 9 August 1945, FO371/48276/R13415; Sargent's letter to Leeper (underlining in original), 9 November, FO800/276.

traditionally closer to Great Britain, it made much of shared cultural values and Greek emigration to the United States. While admitting that American intersts in Greece had not been extensive, it suggested that these interests had been `of a type to promote good-will: trade, banking, engineering and development projects, philanthropy, archeology, and education'.

The paper continued: `Traditionally our policy towards Greece has been one of friendship characterized by refusal to intervene in internal Greek affairs. The Yalta decisions necessitate a reorientation of this policy, for at that meeting this Government indicated its willingness and determination to participate in Allied guarantees that smaller nations liberated from Axis domination should be guaranteed the right of choosing by peaceful and democratic means the government under which they wish to live.'

The announcement of a new and far more positive policy towards Greece was followed by an anti-climax; a list of what the United States should be prepared to undertake. This was limited to supervision of the election and plebiscite; economic assistance, which seemed to be limited to advice and possibly some industrial credits; reduction of ~~`commerical~~ `commercial', financial, social and cultural barriers', which suggests American insistence on the `Open Door' policy whether the Greeks wanted it or not; and some diplomatic support for Greek territorial claims.

There were two points of interest which were rather hidden away. One was a statement that, in suggesting that the Greeks ask for a three-power commission to observe the

election, `It might be possible to indicate our belief that a republican form of government offers more possibilities for a peaceful future than the return of a monarchy already stigmatized by totalitarianism.' While there is no evidence that such an indication was ever passed to the Greek Government, or to British authorities, it must have played some part in American thinking in the ensuing months.

There was also a comment on Soviet influence in the Balkans. While not anticipating full Soviet control of most of the area, the paper suggested that there were two obstacles to American influence there; a possible closed, Russian-controlled economy, and, the extreme nationalism of certain countries. Greece was an exception to general rule of xenophobia in the Balkans, and desirous of closer relations with the United States. The paper continued: `The present Greek fear of Russia is probably responsible for this attitude--an attitude which this Government deprecates but which is understandable and might better be dissipated by our becoming an active mediator than by our relinquishing all of Greek affairs to the control of Great Britain.' In another section, there is the statement: `The situation in which British-dominated Greece and Turkey (and perhaps Albania) would become isolated economically and politically from a group of Russian-dominated Slavic neighbors on the north would be a real menace to world peace.'[63]

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[63]FRUS, *Potsdam*, 1945, pp. 651-652.

The State Department, therefore, in late June 1945, would seem to have had no fear of the spread of Soviet influence into Greece, nor any idea of a possible establishment of Russian domination of the Balkans, except in terms of possible Soviet control of the economy of the area. To the extent it saw a threat, it was from the establishment of British influence on a scale so great as to create a significant barrier between Greece and the rest of the area. By suggesting that the United States should become involved in Greek affairs in order to prevent excessive British influence, without any corresponding action to diminish Soviet economic hegemony, there is a hint that the State Department saw the British, rather than the Russians, as the more dangerous to American interests.

The paper was, of course, only an outline of State Department thinking and a proposal for the consideration of the President. There is no evidence that action was ever taken to institute a programme of active mediation. In the period up to the election, there were only three instances of American influence being brought to bear. The first was the recommendation of July 1945 that the plebiscite should be postponed until after the election. This idea was already being discussed in the Foreign Office, and there is no indication available of how much weight the American proposal carried when Bevin made his decision. The second was MacVeagh's intervention with Damaskinos to persuade him not to resign, but this was at the fervent request of Leeper, and without reference to the State Department. The $25,000,000 credit accompanied by strong demands for reform

of January 1946 was perhaps the most important of the three, but hardly amounted to interference. The full participation of the Americans in the observation of the election was a result of their commitments made at Yalta, and not the outcome of a new policy.

In summary, from Varkiza to the election, the United States maintained its neutrality in Greek affairs. Behind the official statements can be seen a gradual transition from thinly veiled hostility to a more sympathetic attitude. This change was probably influenced by the growing American realisation of its new-found role in international affairs, as recognised in the briefing paper quoted above, and by a simultaneous perception of a Soviet threat, a matter discussed in subsequent chapters. It is also possible, although difficult to demonstrate, that the Americans were beginning to realise that the British were not going to be able to establish a new colony in Greece, and that their intentions might not be as evil as they had suspected.

8. The Plebiscite
April--September 1946

From the first of April 1946, the British were in a more difficult position than before. They would now be dealing with an elected government which might expect to handle matters without external interference. Furthermore, the royalists had a substantial majority in the new Parliament, which gave them not only the implied right to form a one-party government, but even more reason to exert their independence. The presence of a substantial number of

British troops along with British military, police and economic advisors meant that the Greeks were dependent to an extent for the maintainence of law and order and reconstruction, but the expected withdrawal of the troops and the limited amount of actual aid being given reduced British influence further.

The Foreign Office, even prior to the election, recognised the problem. In late February, Hayter asked Sargent what British policy should be if the royalists won, pointing out that they would have to back the Greek Government regardless. Sargent felt that the new government would try to retain British support, especially since a rightist victory would consolidate Communist opposition to such an extent that it would be a direct threat to the royalist regime. The British difficulty would the criticism they would receive at home. McNeil agreed with Sargent, saying, 'I've been wondering what we do about the emerging Government between the period when they take over and when the banked-up civil war overtakes them.' His solution was to retain the various missions and good-will, so long as the new government maintained a semi-liberal attitude to prisons, courts, and the gendarmerie. At the same time, Britain should plan to remove its troops by autumn at least.[64]

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[64]Minutes, 21 February and 1 March, FO371/58676/R3032.

In the instructions to Leeper's successor, Sir Clifford Norton,[65] it was recognised that the days of Cromerism in Greece wwould soon be ended. As soon as the election results were known, Norton informed Greek political leaders that the British Goverment favoured a broad coalition, rather than accepting the royalist government which seemed indicated. In addition, the plebiscite should be postponed until 1948, and Damaskinos should remain as Regent. At the request of the British, the State Department was asked to instruct the American Embassy in Athens to offer similar advice, and hoped that Byrnes would make a public statement hoping that the Regent would continue. Washington issued appropriate instructions to Karl Rankin, in charge in MacVeagh's absence.[66]

Constantine Tsaldaris attempted to form a government which would include some centrist leaders, but he would not accept the long delay in holding the plebiscite, unless the British insisted on it for `international reasons'. It soon appeared that Tsaldaris intended to allow centrists no real power or influence in the new administration Norton felt unable to interfere in view of his instructions, but his reports brought immediate orders from London to threaten Tsaldaris with the withdrawal of British economic and

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[65]Clifford Norton (1891-1971), Minister to Seitzerland, 1942-1946; Ambassador to Greece, 1946-1951. Leeper left Athens on 7 March.

[66]Foreign Office telegrams 539 and 688 to Athens, 13 March and 1 April, telegram 3162 to Washington, FO371/58679/R3748 and 58682/R5023;and Rankin's telegram, 2 April, and State Department telegram, 5 April, FRUS, 1946, VII, 128-132.

military aid unless the plebiscite was delayed and a broad government was formed.[67] Norton delivered London's ultimatum, but Tsaldaris, after a few days of pretence at acceptance, put himself at the head of a one-party, royalist government, which intended to hold the plebiscite within months.[68]

While this government was being formed, the problem of the regency arose again. Damaskinos sent his offer of resignation to the King almost simultaneously with the election. The King was in favour of accepting, maintaining the view he had expressed two years before that constitutionally only the heir to the throne could be appointed Regent. He was probably more influenced by his fear that Damaskinos would be able to maintain the policy of postponement of the plebiscite. Bevin put pressure on the King to retain Damaskinos, without immediate effect.[69]

In a few days, the King accepted the resignation `in principle', but asked the Archbishop to remain until the arrangements for the plebiscite could be made. Rankin accompanied Norton and the temporary Greek Prime Minister in a visit to the Regent, who made it clear that he did not wish to remain under such conditions. Rankin made an individual appeal to Damaskinos not to make a final

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[67]Norton's telegrams 720, 727, and 728, 2 and 3 April, and Foreign Office telegrams 701 and 712, 3 and 4 April, FO371/58683/R5170, R5240, R5276, and R5247.

[68]Norton's telegrams 739 and 872, 4 and 18 April, FO371/58684/R5321 and 58687/R6054; Rankin's telegram 5 April, FRUS, 1946, VII, 130-131.

[69]Memorandum from the King, 4 April, and Bevin's reply, 6 April, FO371/58684/R5388.

decision, and urged Norton to ask London to try to change the King's attitude. The effect of Rankin's intervention is not known, but the Archbishop did decide to remain in office for the time being. Rankin also made it clear to Greek political leaders ~~tht~~ that the Americans opposed an early plebiscite, ~~action abundantly clear,~~ citing the severe economic situation and the inadvisability of holding the plebiscite during the forthcoming Council of Foreign Ministers Conference.[70]

Meanwhile, Bevin had been discussing the matter of the plebiscite with the King, who felt that the majority of the Greek people now wished him to return. In addition, as long as the plebiscite was postponed, the constitutional issue would predominate politics so drastically that the economic problems could not be attacked. He wished for a September plebiscite, which would allow time for preparation and campaigning, but would come before the winter made communications difficult in the mountains. He promised that if he were returned he would pursue a programme of moderation, with a hint that he might try to reduce the worst of the rightist excesses. At this point Bevin began to consider the merits of George II's arguments, and, without mentioning his discussions with the King, sent a summary of the

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[70]Rankin's telegram, 10 April, and Winant's telegram, 10 April, FRUS, 1946, VII, 133-135. Damaskinos continued as Regent until the King returned as the result of the plebiscite.

advantages of an early plebiscite to Norton, indicating that he might change his mind.[71]

The Americans were still supporting the British opposition to an early plebiscite a fortnight later, when Dean Acheson,[72] the American Under Secretary of State in succession to Grew, reiterated this position to the Greek Ambassador in Washington on 18 April.[73] On 26 April, at the Paris Council of Foreign Ministers Conference, Bevin spoke to Brynes, expressing his belief that the plebiscite should not be postponed after all. His argument to Byrnes was that British troops would have to withdrawn from Greece before the end of the year in order to press for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Bulgaria. If the plebiscite were to be held without the presence of British troops, the results would probably be fraudulent, presumably because of excessive right-wing interference. This might, in turn, lead to the left initiating civil war. Therefore the plebiscite should be held in September.

According to the American notes of this conversation, Byrnes saw the logic of Bevin's argument, and would give the matter consideration. According to the British record, Byrnes said `the British were in a better position than the

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[71]Foreign Office telegram 248 and King's memorandum, both 4 April, FO371/58684/R5388; Foreign Office telegram 784, 58686/R5962; Dixon's minute, 5 April, 58687/R6045; Norton's telegram 872, 18 April, 58687/R6054; Winant's telegram, 10 April, FRUS, 1946, VII, 134-135.

[72]Dean Gooderham Acheson (1893-1971), international lawyer; Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, 1933; Assistant Secretary of State, 1941-1945; Under Secretary of State, 1945-1947; Secretary of State, 1949-1953.

[73]FRUS, 1946, VII, 144-5.

United States to assess the situation and that if the British thought that September 1946 was the right date, the United States was prepared to accept it.[74]

In the second week of May, Norton was instructed to notify Tsaldaris that the British agreed to an autumn plebiscite, and Rankin was told that the United States would accept such an arrangement, although it was felt that the Greek Government should have put the solution of the economic problems above the issue of the monarchy.[75] When the new Greek Parliament convened on 12 May, it was announced that the plebiscite would take place on 1 September.

For the next four months, there was little British or American involvement in Greek political matters except for the organisation and operation of a second Allied Mission to Observe Greek Elections (AMFOGEII). The plebiscite took place in an atmosphere of considerable violence, intimidation, and corruption, but the Mission concluded that, even allowing for irregularities, there was a majority in favour of the return of the King (the official results gave the King 69% of the votes cast).[76]

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[74]Bevin's telegram 9 from Paris, FO371/58687/R6382; Memorandum, 27 April, FRUS, 1946, VII, 148-149. Byrnes did not finally make up his mind until 7 May, when he instructed Acheson to obtain Truman's approval (*ibid.*, pp. 157-158).

[75]Norton's telegram 1047, 10 May, FO371/58690/R7099; State Department telegram, 16 May, FRUS, 1946, VII, 162-163.

[76]*Report on the Observation of the Greek Plebiscite*, 7 September, *ibid.*, pp. 204-207.

9. British and American Policy after the Plebiscite September 1946--February 1947

The King was undoubtedly pleased, but realised he faced a difficult future. Before leaving London, he made it clear to Bevin and the Foreign Office that he intended a moderate policy with which he hoped to gain the cooperation of all policitcal elements except the Communists. He expected to form a new administration with Tsaldaris as Prime Minister, in which as many parties as possible would be represented.[77] While he was received in Athens in a spirit of harmony, negotiations to include the Sophoulis Liberals failed, probably because the latter felt it would be better tactics to allow the royalists to weaken themselves in the face of the desperate economic situation. The British authorities held back from intervention, other than further encouragement ~~encouragement~~ to the King to try to form a coalition. It was only after the Americans began to take a more active interest in Greece that they put pressure on the right-wing government to modify its policies.

For the past two years, the Americans had maintained their policy of neutrality, modified only by their active participation in the election missions and the occasional reinforcement of British advice in times of political crisis, usually on the initiative of MacVeagh or Rankin,

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[77]King's memorandum to Bevin, 13 September, and Bevin's account of his meeting with the King, Foreign Office telegram 1954, 14 September, FO371/58709/R14079.

rather than instuctions from Washington. October 1946 marks the beginning of a more positive attitude on the part of the United States towards Greece, the origins of which are traced in a subsequent chapter. One of its earliest effects was an instruction to MacVeagh to take a stronger role in influencing Greek politics. The new policy took the British by surprise. While the American Charge d´Affaires in London had told the Foreign Office on 16 October that a programme of American economic assistance to Greece was being prepared, he seems to have said nothing about a new approach to political affairs.[78]

MacVeagh, prior to receiving new instructions from Washington, saw the King on 11 October and made several suggestions `on the purely personal and informal basis which he seems to invite and appreciate´. These included rather emphatic recommendations that he insist on the formation of a broadly based government; and that he press for action to ensure impartial justice, observation of civil rights and the elimination of right-wing violence against the left. The King expressed his complete agreement with these ideas, although MacVeagh doubted that he would be able to do much about them. While MacVeagh took this action without specific instructions from the State Department, but he was highly commended for his action by Acheson, who indicated that he should tell the King that the United States Government was in full agreement with MacVeagh´s suggestions

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[78]Minute, 17 October, FO371/58712/R15603. Gallman apparently referred to Acheson´s telegram to Athens, FRUS, 1946, VII, 235-237.

and was gratified to learn of the King's reception of them.[79]

MacVeagh showed his report on the conversation to Norton who passed on a summary to the Foreign Office, without much comment. The Foreign Office were not particularly happy about this development. Selby minuted: `I am not sure that the Americans are not asking the King to assume some of the powers of a dictator. If he is going to act as a constituional monarch, he has got, *ipso facto*, to accept the advice of his ministers on most questions.'[80]

On 16 October, the same day he received his commendation from Acheson, the State Department sent MacVeagh a detailed list of intended American actions with regard to Greece, covering a number of topics, most of them dealing with the economic situation and Greek foreign affairs. Also included were instructions to explain to the King and Greek political leaders that American actions in support of Greece were based on the assumption that the Greek Government `would strive for a policy of moderation in connection with divergent Greek political factions the basic loyalty of which to Greece is not subject to question, as well as in its relations with neighboring countries'. While this seems to have given *carte blanche* for actions against the Communists, there was a strong warning that the United States

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[79]MacVeagh's telegram, 11 October, and Acheson's telegram, 16 October, FRUS, 1946, VII, 233-235 and 238..

[80]Norton's telegram 266 SAVING, 14 October, and Selby's comment, FO371/58711/R15347.

would look with disfavour on excessive measures by the extreme right against its political opponents.

The Greek Government was also to be warned that the State Department believed that they had not applied measures for internal order impartially, but had encouraged lawlessness on the part of the extreme right. Further, the Department held that there had been significant falsification of the plebiscite vote, although they accepted that a majority voted for the King. It continued: `Also, although Tsaldaris may be legally correct in stating that the March elections gave the Populist Party a clear mandate to form a Government it would appear that this is not a time for narrow legalistic argumentation but for an enlightened and patriotic attempt to bring together all decent democratic elements in Greece in a unity equally important now for the continued existence of the Greek nation as it was during the war.' The State Department indicated that they had suggested informally to the British that they consider giving the King similar advice. MacVeagh replied that he could not concur too strongly in the revaluated [*sic*] policy."[1]

MacVeagh saw the King again a few days later and acquainted him with the contents of the State Department statement. The King accepted the American views and seemed to agree with them. He made no criticisms of the British, but commented on MacVeagh's remarks: `This is just the way Bevin talks to me.' MacVeagh told Norton of this second conversation with the King, although it is not clear ~~as to~~

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[1]State Department telegram, 15 October, and MacVeagh telegram, 17 October, FRUS, 1946, VII, 235-237.

how much detail concerning the new policy was given to the British Ambassador. The latter sent an immediate telegram to the Foreign Office, commenting that he felt MacVeagh's actions represented an excessive intervention in Greek affairs.[82]

The State Department had earlier suggested to the British Embassy in Washington that the two powers send simultaneous messages to George II welcoming his return to Greece, and hoping that his new government would not engage in any excesses or violations of civil rights. They suggested publication after the notes had been formally delivered by the Ambassadors. The Foreign Office took a rather contradictory position; on the one hand they termed it a welcome tendency of the United States to show an interest in Greek affairs, which should not be discouraged; on the other hand, they felt such a note amounted to undue interference in Greek affairs, especially since George II was supposed to be a constitutional monarch, and presumably therefore not in a position to influence the elected government.[83]

No decision was taken in London for some time, because it was intended to use the request in an attempt to obtain more definite ideas of what the new policies of the State Department were. As an incentive, the Americans were to be given a general review of British policy. However, this was

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[82]MacVeagh's telegram, 19 October, *ibid.*, pp. 238-239; Norton's telegram 2281, 19 October, F0371/58711/R15391.

[83]Washington Embassy telegram 5975, 8 October, and Selby's minute, F0371/58710/R14984.

then deemed unnecessary in view of recent talks between Byrnes and A. V. Alexander, Minister without Portfolio, (discussed in Chapter VII), although the Foreign Office was still opposed to the idea of a joint message. The need for a reply to the Americans was discussed, along with Norton's report of MacVeagh's second talk with the King. The Foreign Office view was set forth in a memorandum by C. F. A. Warner of 25 October:

> This sudden suggestion seemed puzzling, until we discovered some time later that it was only one item in a new United States policy towards Greece, and was to be accompanied by offers of potential help.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Our position in this matter is quite different from that of the Americans since we have been urging moderation on both the King and the Government on a number of different points for a long time past and we are taking active steps to produce the desired result in the case of the Greek trade unions. In any case general exhortations to be moderate are not appropriate. What is required is carefully considered advice on specific points.
>
> This matter has been discussed with Sir Orme Sargent and it was agreed that we should enlighten the State Department's not unnatural ignorance on the ins and outs of the internal situation about which we are much better informed through our Missions and through closer contacts with the Greek King and Government by giving them a full picture.

A lengthy draft telegram rehearsing numerous arguments to be given to the State Department was drafted, but apparently not used. Instead, a short message was sent to the effect that the British no longer saw any need for the message. The Americans eventually decided that it was unnecessary in view of MacVeagh's talks with the King.

There is no indication that they were influenced by the British attitude.[84]

A few days later MacVeagh and Norton saw Tsaldaris and again urged the broadening of the Government. While he agreed to try, he found that the other parties would agree only if he stepped down as Prime Minister, a condition he was unwilling to accept. The King then intervened without success in an attempt to force a coalition, and MacVeagh and Norton continued their efforts. In early November they succeeded in bringing enough pressure on Tsaldaris to bring about the dismissal of the Minister of Defence, Petros Mavromichalis, who appeared to be using his position to support right-wing violence and terrorism.

Bevin made a personal approach to Tsaldaris when the latterwas in London to invite other parties to join the government; the Foreign Office considered open intervention in Greek affairs to establish a coalition, but it was decided that the King would not cooperate; MacVeagh and Norton continued their pressure, but none of these actions brought about any change until the end of January 1947, when Dimitrios Maximos, an elderly and moderate royalist, became Prime Minister of a cabinet which included representatives

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[84]William's minute, 24 October, Warner's memorandum, 25 October, and Foreign Office telegram 10235, 28 October, FO371/58711/R15391; State Department tele-gram, 6 November, FRUS, 1946, VII, 239.

of most of the Greek political parties except for the Communists.[85]

British policy after the election was rather more straight-forward, althought the relationship with the Greek Government was remarkably similar. The initial instructions to the Athens Embassy was to interfere as little as possible, although it was made clear to the Regent that the British wanted a broad coalition and a postponement of the plebiscite. Both objectives were contrary to the wishes of the political party which had won the election with an overwhelming majority, yet these departures from democratic principles were the result of the best of intentions. The British were convinced that the political stability and economic recovery of Greece could only be assured by the establishment of a moderate government representing a wide spectrum of interests, and by the postponement of the question of the King's future.

In the event, neither of these two British objectives were achieved. The rightist groups forced an early plebiscite, the return of the King, and a right-wing government. The failure of successive Greek Governments, centrist or right-wing, to institute full law and order and to halt economic deterioration resulted in the resumption of civil

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[85]The various attempts of MacVeagh, Norton, and Bevin to broaden the government from late October 1946 to the accession of the Maximos administration are reported in detail in FO371/58712-9, 58751, 58759, 58890-1, and 66994-8; and FRUS, 1946, VII, 270-1, 286-8, and FRUS, 1947, V, 4-5, 9-13.

pp. 270-1, 286-8; and 1947, V, 4-5, 9-13.

war, this time on a far more extensive scale. British efforts to postpone the plebisicte had to be abandoned. There was never as much direct intervention as before the election; the only successful actions were those connected with the Regent's attempts to resign prior to the plebiscite and the behind-the-scenes pressures to rid the royalist government of Mavromichaelis and, at the very end, the establishment of the broadly based government of Maximos.

This is not to argue that British policies, if they had been accepted by the Greeks, would have solved the problems and prevented the Third Round. Centrist or broad coalition governments did not, in this period, represent the will of a majority of the people; perhaps more to the point, there was no factor in Greek politics which would override personal and factional disagreements sufficiently to make a coalition workable. Even if such a government could have been established, it would have been faced with an ecnomic crisis which could not be remedied without the injection of substantial capital and sound financial administration. Britain could (and did) provide economic advice throughout the period, but it was usually ignored. If the British had been able to provide the necessary reconstruction aid, they might have used their control of funds to ensure that a sound economy was re-established.

British political policies from Varkiza to early 1947 may be criticised on grounds that they failed to establish a moderate and stable government along with economic recovery. They may also be faulted for ignoring democratic principles in their attempts to procure governments made up of all the

main political movements instead of accepting the royalist election victories. There is no doubt that their intentions were logical and in the best interests of Greece. The dangers of right-wing control of Greece were fully recognised (except by Churchill) and go a long way towards justifying British interference. If there is a valid criticism, it concerns the relative lack of British pressure on Greek Governments to eliminate extreme right wing terrorism, but it is difficult to suggest what substantial measures the British might have taken beyond more persistent protests.

In the long run, was the British policy towards Greece in this period harmful or helpful to Greece? Would any other policy, short of the use of massive numbers of British troops to police the country from one end to the other, have reduced right-wing violence and provided more stability? Would an early plebisicite and election have established a popular government which would have been able to establish law and order and begin reconstruction, or would they have led to right-wing dominance far more extreme than that which came into effect after March 1946, or even civil war? There seems little doubt that an early plebiscite and election would have returned the King and a royalist assembly, in view of the actual results when the votes were taken. Whether this would have been more dangerous in, say, the summer of 1945, than a year later is impossible to establish. What is evident is that British policy succeeded in preventing further civil war for eighteen months, and held

the political system together until 1947, although not without great difficulty.[85]

[85]American policy from the time of the plebiscite is analysed in greater depth in Chapter 7.

Chapter VII

Economic Support for Greece
January 1945--January 1947

1. The Economic Situation

From the time of the plebiscite onwards, Greece was in the throes of the Third Round, that is, the organised rising of the EAM. Whether this was a reaction to the violence of the extreme right or a deliberate attempt to seize control of the country is a not a question for this work, nor is the matter of whether it was an action directed by Stalin.[1] The significant point is that the revolt prevented the Government from maintaining law and order in many areas of Greece from the autumn of 1946 onwards. Its strength can most easily be demonstrated by the fact that it required three years to bring it to an end, even with extensive American economic and military aid. The increasing pressure of the uprising was a major factor in British and American efforts to establish an effective government in this period, as well as amounting to an financial problem for the British.

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[1]These problems are discussed by Evangelos Averoff-Tossizza, *By Fire and Axe* (New Rochelle: Caratzas, 1978); D. G. Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); Mavrogordatas, "The 1946 Elections and Plebiscite;" Richter, *British Intervention in Greece*; Ole L. Smith, "On the Beginning of the Greek Civil War," *Scandanavian Studies in Modern Greek*, I (1977), pp. 15-31; and Woodhouse, *Struggle for Greece*, ch. 7.

The economic problems of Greece were as significant in its post-war development as those of political stability and law and order. The country had been in a state of actual famine since 1941, relieved only partially by the food shipments of the Red Cross. There had been massive physical destruction of houses, olive groves, vineyards, machinery, and ships, the main sources of Greek income and subsistence. The shortages of food and every other sort of commodity, coupled with a failure of successive governments to balance the budget, had brought about spiraling inflation until the only standard of value was the gold sovereign. The military forces entering Greece brought with them emergency supplies for the civilian population, and in April 1945 UNRRA began a full-scale programme of relief which continued into mid-1947.[2] These measures were only palliative; there was a desperate need for outside financial assistance for reconstruction and for stringent controls on the Greek economy.

Even before the truce which halted the civil war in January 1945, the Greek Government was asking the British and American Governments to take over the costs of the Greek Armed Forces, in order to preserve their foreign exchange assets for the purchase abroad of necessary consumer goods.[3] After considerable negotiation, the British Government agreed to assume the costs of food pay and equipment of the

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[2]War Department message, 6 January, and MacVeagh's telegrams, 8 January and 12 March, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 193-194 and 201-202.

[3]MacVeagh's telegrams, 26 and 30 January, *ibid.*, pp. 195-197.

new armed forces, and continued this support until May 1947.[4]

So far as reconstruction was concerned, the British pinned most of their hopes on the United States. When arrangements were being made to turn over the functions of Military Liaison (the military relief operation) to UNRRA in mid-March 1945, Leeper recommended to MacVeagh that the joint Anglo-American committee system which had supervised ML should be retained to advise the Greek Government on economic matters. MacVeagh disagreed and advised the State Department against such an arrangement, since it would amount to the sharing with the British `the responsibility for the success or failure of a Greek reconstruction problem which cannot fail to become involved in local politics´. If the United States were to assume some role in advising the Greek Government, it should be carried out behind the scenes in order to avoid embarrassment. The State Department agreed completely.[5]

The day after the State Department´s reply, Roosevelt wrote to Churchill in quite a different vein, suggesting

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[4]Further details on the British support of the Greek Armed Forces in note 24, this chapter.

[5]MacVeagh´s telegram and State Department reply, 14 and 20 March, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 202-203, 211-212. In July 1945, Governor Lehman, the American Director of UNRRA, visited Athens and urged MacVeagh to join with the British Embassy in advising the Greek Government on UNRRA affairs. MacVeagh ´explained to him at length the superior position enjoyed by the British here in consequence of their political and military tutelage over the country, and emphasised that American advice can, in my opinion (and in accordance with the [State] Department´s instructions), be most effectively rendered if given independently of an association inevitably overshadowing in Greek eyes´ (*ibid.* p. 229, n. 50).

that a three-power economic commision for Greece be established comprised of persons such as Oliver Lyttleton, the British Minister of Production; Donald Nelson, the former Chairman of the American War Production Board, and Anastas Mikoyan, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Trade. Churchill pointed out all the disadvantages of a commission which included the Soviets, but used this as a welcome opportunity to recommend a joint Anglo-American committee to advise the Greek Government on economic matters. In a memorandum prepared by the State Department, the President agreed that inviting the Russians was probably not a good idea. At the same time he rejected the Anglo-American committee proposal on grounds that it would violate the principles of Yalta. Also included was a reference to Leeper's discussion with MacVeagh and the Department's confirmation of MacVeagh's views.[6] The British Government, both in London and through its Athens Embassy continued to press for American participation on joint Anglo-Greek economic committees, often by urging the Greek Government to invite the Americans to send representatives to meetings, and by describing various committees as `tripartite'.[7]

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[6]Roosevelt, 21 March; Churchill, 3 April, State Department draft reply, undated, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 203-208; it was formalised and signed by Roosevelt, 8 April (Kimball, *Churchill-Roosevelt Correspondence*, III, 618-619).

[7]A discussion of this situation, with exact details, is in MacVeagh's telegram, 18 June, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 224-228.

2. Limited American Aid

While both the British and American Governments recognised that there were major economic and financial problems involved in Greece after the liberation, it was not until the autumn of 1945 that the desperate situation began to be recognised. In October the Senior Deputy Director of UNRRA, Commander R. G. A. Jackson, reported to the Director General the signs of an approaching economic breakdown. This he blamed on the failure of the Greek Government to take positive action to reform the economic and fiscal systems. In his view, only intervention from outside could save the situation. He recommended the formation of an economic advisory mission by the major powers, Britain, the United States and Canada (Canada was a major contributor to UNRRA). Jackson felt that unless action was taken within four or five weeks to show that these powers were intent on intervening in Greek economic affairs, there would be a collapse so severe as to make further help of no value.*

Jackson's messages made the State Department `increasingly apprehensive of a possible breakdown of Greek Government machinery'. They saw no possibility of American loans to a country `offering such little financial and economic stability as Greece at this time', but indicated that they were giving serious consideration to Jackson's

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*Jackson's three messages, 27 and 28 October, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 246-251.

recommendations. MacVeagh, asked for his opinion, did not play down the seriousness of the economic situation, but was not convinced that a complete disaster was imminent. He also opposed the United States joining any semi-permanent economic advisory body. He was hopeful that early elections would do more to improve the economy than would be possible through technical advice.[9]

At the same time, General William Morgan (British Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean in succession to Alexander), and Field Marshall Alan Brooke (Chief of the Imperial General Staff who was visiting the theatre), had reported that the Greek economic problem was more desperate than ever. Morgan saw the problem as a military one, citing the `Red Tide´ in Greece´s northern neighbours, and suggested that the projected withdrawal of a large number of British troops and the ending of British financial support to the Greek Armed Forces (due to end 1 January 1946), coupled with the chaotic economic situation, would leave Greece vulnerable to invasion. Unless the United States was prepared to play a more active role in the country, the British should cut their losses and abandon Greece. Morgan felt the most useful ~~Aemrican~~ American contribution would be a garrison of United State troops or at least air force units alongside the British. He recommended that Attlee discuss Greece with Truman on his forthcoming visit to Washington.[10]

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[9]State Department telegram, 2 November, and MacVeagh´s telegram, 5 November, *ibid.*, pp. 252-253, 257-258.

[10]Kirk´s telegrams, 2 and 4 November, *ibid.*, pp. 251-254.

The State Department took note of Morgan's recommendations and prepared a memorandum for Truman, warning that Attlee might broach the subject. While the Department could not agree to the acceptance of any military responsibility in Greece, they felt the situation `critical enough to justify active steps on our part'. If matters worsened, it might not be possible to hold the election under conditions which would ensure a fair decision. The fear of an invasion from the North was mentioned. The `active steps' proposed amounted only to telling the Greeks that the United States was deeply concerned; urging them to undertake `a stringent program of economic stablization'; letting them know that any future loans to Greece would depend on how well they did this; and offering the services of some technical experts. Since primary responsibilities in Greece rested with the British, no action should be taken until proposals were discussed with London. Truman approved holding such discussions, but declined to commit himself until he was aware of the results.[11]

After it was clear that the British approved and MacVeagh had been consulted, the State Department prepared a draft note to be sent to the Greek Government to incorporate the warnings and the offer of technical experts. It did include the announcement of a $25,000,000 Export-Import Bank loan, but the overall effect was stern. Truman sent the draft back to the State Department, saying it was harshly

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[11]Memoranda, *ibid.*, pp. 263-267. Attlee apparently did not mention Greece in his talks with Truman (*ibid.*, p. 252, n. 98).

worded. He commented: `While I am not an expert in the matter, can't we say the same things and implement the same policy in a little more friendly way.' The note was duly amended, approved by Truman, and eventually ~~delivered~~ delivered to the Greek Government on 12 January 1946; a public announcement of its contents was made the same day.[12] This action was taken at exactly the same time the British provided the £10,000,000 grant for stabilisation of the currency and the cancellation of the Greek war debt, but there is no evidence that the two actions were coordinated.

The $25,000,000 Export-Import Bank credit arranged by the United States was the culmination of negotiations going back to the Bretton Woods conference of July 1944, when Kyriakos Varvaressos, Governor of the Bank of Greece and Ambassador Extraordinary for Economic Affairs, visited Stettinius, then Under Secretary of State. Varvaressos provided a careful review of the assistance already given by the British, Americans and Canadians, along with an analysis of the urgent needs of the Greek ~~Govern-ment,~~ Government and concluded with a request for a loan of $25,000,000.

A few days later, Alexander Argyropoulos of the Greek Foreign Office, met with State Department officials and MacVeagh (then on leave in Washington) to discuss this request. According to Foy Kohler, who had called the meeting, `it was understood some time ago that if we looked

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[12]Baxter's report, 10 January, State Department telegram, 28 November, MacVeagh's telegram, 1 December, Acheson's memoranda, 20 December and 3 January, and Truman's note, 22 December, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 267 (n. 17), 272, 275-6, 290-291, 299.

after Greece's *dollar* needs, the British would take care of what they want in *pounds*, and it does not appear that what they need in dollar exchange now is anything like the sum requested'. In addition, the Americans feared that money loaned to Greece might be used to reimburse the British. Argyropoulos was asked to provide more details of Greek needs and the purposes for which the money was to be used.[135]

The State Department was generally favourable to this loan, despite their unenthusiastic attitude in their discussions with the Greek representatives. At the time, such a loan was prohibited by American law, since Greece had defaulted on its World War I debts, and had not made the partial payments required by the Hoover Moratorium of 1932. There was now hope that new legislation could be obtained to avoid this difficulty. In the meantime, ~~negotations~~ negotiations continued in order to define the terms of the proposal, but no real progress was made. Varvaressos returned to Washington in May for further talks about the loan, and was given some encouragement, but the legal ban was then still in force. On 31 July 1945, Greece, along with most other nations who

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[135]Varvaressos memorandum, 27 July, and Kohler's memorandum, 5 August, FRUS, 1944, V, 216-222; Kohler's statement (italics in original), Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, p. 578. Kohler was apparently referring to a British statement of September 1942, which indicated that the Foreign Office accepted that Greek requirements for sterling would be a responsibility of Britain (FRUS, 1942, II, 803-804). It is not clear as to when or whether the United States had agreed to provide necessary dollars.

were members of the International Monetary Fund, was freed from the provisions of the old law.[14]

Shortly afterward, Varvaressos, now Deputy Prime Minister, made a radio broadcast in which he said that the American Import-Export Bank had invited Greece to submit an official request for a loan. He continued by saying that the request had already been submitted in the amount of two hundred and fifty million dollars `and we are certain that it will be accepted.' He added that Greece could obtain further amounts from the International Bank for Reconstruction which was to be established in the near future. MacVeagh asked the State Department for the basis for the `astronomical expectations' of the Greeks, and was told that there was none; there might be some moderate loans to Greece. In a few weeks, MacVeagh reported that almost daily references in the Greek press to the large loan were convincing the Greek people that the sum was assured, so that the eventual denial by the United States would have unfortunate repercussions. The State Department instructed him to impress upon the Greek Government that the $250,000,000 was not being taken seriously.[15]

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[14]State Department telegrams, 25 October and 7 November, Murray's memorandum, 28 October, and MacVeagh's telegram, 14 November, FRUS, 1944, V, 222-223 and nn. 55 and 57, 224-227; Baxter's memorandua, 3 and 5 May, and Clayton's letter, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 213-215 and n. 27.

[15]MacVeagh's telegrams 18 and 21 August, 20 September, 2 October, and 5 January, Greek Ambassador's letter, 20 August, and State Department telegrams, 25 August and 22 September, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 232-236 and n. 66, 243-244, and 299-300.

The American authorities informed the Greek Ambassador that, pending action on the large loan, they should submit a separate request for the $25,000,000 amount, which would receive favourable consideration. In a subsequent discussion, it was made clear that any additional amounts would have to be the subject of new proposals. The Greek Government was not able to submit a detailed plan explaining how the twenty-five million dollars was to be used until mid-November, and this had to be modified in the light of the Athens Embassy's knowledge of the real needs of Greece. While the stern message sent in draft to Truman for approval on 20 December included a definite statement that the loan would be forthcoming, it was not approved until 9 January, which accounts for the delay until 12 January 1946 in notification to the Greek Government.[15]

3. British Financial Aid

At about the same time the State Department was reacting to the UNRRA and Morgan appreciations, the Foreign Office told the American Ambassador in London that they were concerned about the deterioration of the Greek economy, and that Hector McNeil was being sent to Athens 'to give some strength and encouragement ' to the new Greek Government of

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[15]State Department memoranda, 25 September and 19 October, MacVeagh's telegrams, 5 and 29 November, State Department telegrams 16 and 28 November and 11 December, *ibid.*, pp. 237-238, 245-246, 256-257, 269-270, 272-274, 283; Acheson's telegram, 10 January, FRUS, 1946, VII, 89-90.

Kannellopoulos.[17] As discussed in Chapter 6, McNeil offered a British economic mission in return for Greek promises to reform the military and proceed with the election.

Even though the Greeks held out for significant financial aid as a quid-pro-quo for reform, McNeil recommended to London that the British send out an economic mission to Greece in any case, suggesting American participation. Bevin made a formal request to the American Government to participate in the mission and to join them in sending the Greeks an identic message. This would say that Greece had sufficient reserve foreign currency to purchase necessary goods, and therefore there was no urgent need for loans. The two powers would try to provide needed materials for reconstruction, but Greece would have to stablise the economy through its own efforts. At the same time, it suggested that assistance already given Greece through UNRRA and other aid would be wasted unless the Greek Government took immediate steps to halt inflation by instituting heavy taxes.

The American Government made no answer to Bevin, although the State Department informed MacVeagh that there would be no American participation in the proposed economic mission. Despite a letter of reminder from the British Embassy, the State Department still had not replied to either message after five weeks, and had not even told its representatives in London of their attitude. No record has

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[17]Winant's telegram, 7 November, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 262.

been found of any written reply to Bevin, although it would appear that the British Embassy in Washington was told informally of the American position.[14] The British Economic Mission arrived in Athens in mid-December and made great efforts to help the Greeks with so little success that the head of the Mission wanted it abandoned within nine months of its inception. It did serve a useful purpose at least in reporting the economic and financial problems of Greece.[15]

Even though McNeil had denied the possibility of financial aid, the Greek Government began pressing Britain for a large loan for reconstruction purposes. The need was fully recognised, but Britain's own financial problems made it unlikely. Britain finally proposed an arrangement by which they would make a loan of ten million pounds to provide backing for the Greek currency, with the proviso that the future issue of drachmae would be regulated by a currency control commission on which British and American representatives would play a major part.

It was made clear that Britain would provide no further funds for rehabilitation or reconstruction, although Greece would be supported in any applications for loans from the new International Bank of Reconstruction and Development.

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[14]Foreign Office telegrams 12159 and 13021, 4 December, FO371/48388/R20345 and R21439; Washington Embassy telegram 8264 and Foreign Office telegram 12081, 2 December, 48416/R20791 and 20388; MacVeagh's telegrams, 15 and 16 November; British Aide-Memoire, 3 December, State Department telegram, 17 December, and Baxter memorandum, 10 January, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 267-269, 276-277, 288-289, 295-296, and p. 296, n. 57.

[15]General Clarke's memorandum, 30 August, FO371/58803/R13630.

The Greeks were also required to take steps to balance their budget, increase taxes, reduce the size of the civil service, and limit wage increases. Britain would also waive repayment of £46,000,000 loaned to Greece during the war. The Foreign Office had great difficulty in convincing the Treasury, but Dalton, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, finally gave in, telling Bevin, `I have little confidence in Tsouderos and Co. and I rely on you to put all possible pressure on them to do their duty so that we shan't have thrown this £10 million down the drain!'[20]

The State Department, not surprisingly, objected to the idea of an American representative on the currency control commission. This would amount to `participation in the internal affairs of a friendly foreign nation far in excess of that to which the United States had heretofore been willing to agree'. It was possible that the commission might fail to achieve its aims, in which case the United States would `share the onus of such failure and become subject to attack in Greek politics'. In a message to the Greek Government, Byrnes repeated both these objections, but agreed to allow an American citizen to serve on the body in `a private capacity' provided that it was clearly understood that the participation by an American national in no way committed the United States to providing any additional financial support. The American member was to be selected

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[20]The package was announced publicly on 25 January 1946 (418 *Parl. Deb.*, cols. 451-454. The Joint Leeper/MacVeagh appeal, 11 January, FRUS, 1946, VII, 91-92; summary of British discussions on economic aid, 24 December, FO371/8338/R21610; Dalton letter, 14 January, 58721/R979.

by the Greek Government from an informal list of persons the U.S. Government would suggest.[21]

The British package of economic aid and the conditions imposed on the Greek Government were transmitted to Tsouderos on 24 January, three days after the publication of the U.S. note announcing the $25,000,000 Export/Import Bank credit, along with the appeal for reforms. It was accepted by the Greek Government and given a moderate welcome by the Greek public; there was some recognition of the difficult ~~pesiton~~ position of Britain. Within a few weeks, the British Cabinet was sent `a flaming warning'[22] by Dalton on the state of the deficit in the balance of payments. He included a memorandum by Lord Keynes on the general financial problems of the nation. This included a statement that aid to Greece would have to be reduced, with a recommendation that Britain should attempt to induce the Americans to assume some of the burden, once UNRRA aid ended.[23]

In mid-April, Norton wrote to Sargent concerning the costs of the Greek Armed Forces. The British had been supplying rations, uniforms and weapons under the Anglo-Hellenic Agreement of 1942, but this commitment had expired on 1 January 1946. The annual cost of this requirement was almost exactly equivalent to the total estimated revenue of Greece for the same period. Bevin warned the Cabinet that,

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[21]State Department telegram, 10 January, Byrnes memorandum to Tsouderos, 15 January, and Winant's telegram, 22 January, FRUS, 1946, VII, 89, 95-96, 100-104.

[22]Dalton, *Diaries*, 9 February 1946.

[23]CP(46)58, 9 February, CAB129/7; Dalton, *Diaries*, 18 February.

unless further outside aid could be obtained, the Greek forces would have to be reduced to the extent that they could not be effective against an invasion from the north. The Chiefs of Staff recommended that Britain resume payment of the sterling costs, about £15,000,000 annually. In June, the Cabinet decided to restore aid until the end of 1946, and in July the Defence Committee of the Cabinet extended this period to 31 March 1947. Dalton was most unhappy, claiming that the Greeks had not made good use of the funds already given them, but finally agreed. He made it clear that there should be no further loans.[24]

With very minor exceptions, the funds for the armed forces were to be the only financial aid given by Britain to Greece after the currency stablisation loan of January 1946. In all, British financial aid to Greece from January 1944 to January 1947 amounted to thirty million pounds in support of the Greek armed forces, plus the ten million pounds for the

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[24]DO(46)23rd, 7 March, CAB131/1; Norton's letter, 15 April, 58766/R6356; Norton's telegram 1201, 27 May, 58729/R7947; CP(46)213, 30 May, CAB129/10; CM(46)54, 3 June, CAB128/7; DO(46)91, 15 July, CAB131/3; Minute, 20 July, FO371/58701/R11673.

currency fund.[25] As late as November 1946, it was assumed that reconstruction aid was not really needed. Donald Maclean, of the Washington Embassy, told the State Department then that the Foreign Office had assumed that Greece could find assets to tide them over, but a recent message from Norton had ~~indicatd~~ indicated that the situation was grave.[26]

4. Attempts to Obtain American Aid

In considering the problem, the Foreign Office staff thought of one posible, if only partial, solution. Bevin had had a discussion concerning Greece with Byrnes during the Paris Foreign Ministers Conference in April, during which, according to the British records, Byrnes said, "The Communists must be kept out of Greece at all costs". While no American record of this remark has been found, it was to

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[25]The most detailed breakdown of British aid to Greece, 1944-1947, is that dated 29 January 1947 in FO371/67032/R2438; this agrees almost exactly with the figures in Dalton's letter to Attlee of 17 February 1947, *ibid.*, R2443. This estimate is confirmed by a most careful examination of accounts by Foreign Office and Treasury officials in early 1948 (72279/R2487). Dalton's figures of eighty-seven million pounds (434 *Parl. Deb.*, cols. 650-651 (6 March 1947) are misleading; they apparently include forty-eight million pounds for the maintenance of British forces in Greece, most of which would have had to be spent wherever these troops were stationed. No confirmation has been found for Bullock's statement in *Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary* (London: Heinemann, 1983), p. 161, that Britain made available a loan of twenty-four million pounds for reconstruction.

[26]Memorandum, 18 November, FRUS, 1946, VII, 264.

be quoted by the British for the next year as a promise by the United States to provide aid to Greece.[27]

Byrnes' statement gave the Foreign Office the idea that `it might be possible to induce the Americans to share whatever financial burdens would otherwise fall exclusively on our own shoulders'. Hayter approved the idea, although he pointed out: `Possibly the present moment, when we are trying to involve the Americans in Palestine, is not the best one to involve them in Greece. Alternatively it must be held that it is better to make them swallow both at one gulp.' Another official had doubts about pinning the Americans down. He felt they `were taking a very good line in resisting the Soviet pretensions just now and they might be inclined to feel that we were trying to commit them too far and to resent it'.

A draft proposal suggested that Bevin discuss the matter with Byrnes during their June meeting in Paris, but this was marked `suspend', apparently on Sargent's instructions.[28] This decision may have been influenced by a messaage from the Washington Embassy that the State Department expected the Greeks to have a stable economy by

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[27]Foreign Office minute, 9 May 1946, FO371/58767/R6382. British discussions concerning possible American aid to Greece continually quote such a statement of Byrnes. American records mention a conversation of Bevin and Byrnes concerning Greece on 26 April but there is no quotation similar to this, or anything about a communist threat to Greece (FRUS, 1946, VII, 148-149).

[28]Minutes, 9, 10, and 27 May, FO371/58766/R6356.

1947 and to need no external assistance, except for International Monetary Fund aid.[29]

July saw a new attempt of the Greek Government to obtain more financial assistance. The Greek Embassy in Washington sent a telegram to Tsaldaris, just before he left for Paris and London, saying that a senior officer of the Export-Import Bank had urged the Greeks to apply for large-scale loans for reconstruction. The Greek Government therefore developed a proposal for a loan of six billion dollars (£1,500,000,000) over a period of five years. Tsaldaris approached the British first for this amount, pointing out that the Greeks did not know whether to turn to the Americans or not. On 12 July, he eventually revealed the apparent American offer and asked whether there would be any objection to going to Washington to discuss it. Dalton was very much in favour of asking for as much American aid as possible.[30]

The British leaders were not aware that Tsaldaris's economic advisor had already described the proposal to Leonard Unger, who served Byrnes in the same capacity. Unger's record shows that he strongly discouraged hopes of

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[29]Washington Embassy telegram 3193, 16 May, Treasury Records, Class 236 (hereinafter T236), File: OF48/34/1A. No copy has been found in Foreign Office records. An internal Treasury minute in the same file sets forth the view that the State Department figures were based on out-of-date Greek statistics. Treasury officials believed that Greece might meet her foreign exchange requirements for 1947 by selling off her reserves, but would then be destitute in 1948.

[30]Stephen G. Xydis, *Greece and the Great Powers*, pp. 257ff; minutes, 8-10 July, FO371/58906/R10729; London Embassy telegram, 18 July, FRUS, 1946, VII, 183-184.

any loan of such magnitude, and reported his conversation to Byrnes. It would appear that Byrnes did not have time to read Unger's memorandum before the Greek Prime Minister visited the Secretary of State on 5 July. Tsaldaris told Byrnes that Unger had found the Greek proposal reasonable. Byrnes' Political Advisor who was present pointed out that the Greeks were asking for six billion dollars, an amount which Byrnes might not think 'was within the realm of possibilities'. The Secretary of State agreed and Tsaldaris was quick to point out that the figure was only tentative. Byrnes did ask the State Department to examine the possibility of additional Export-Import Bank aid.[31]

Within hours of Dalton's approval of an approach to the Americans, Tsaldaris called on the American Ambassador in London, Averell Harriman. He told him of the reported willingness of the Import-Export Bank to grant large-scale loans, and of his conversation with Byrnes in Paris, although he did not seem to have mentioned that the latter had given little hope for any major aid. He wanted Harriman to arrange for visit to Washington by Greek economic experts to discuss their proposals with the Export-Import Bank.

Harriman reported the visit to the State Department who replied that the Greek Embassy telegram which began this imbroglio had seriously misrepresented the attitude of the Export-Import Bank. All that had been said was that the Bank would examine any new Greek requests; no encouragement

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[31]Unger's memorandum, and memorandum of Byrnes' conversation with Tsaldaris, both 5 July, FRUS, 1946, VII, 175-179.

had been given. The chances of further loans from this source were very slim. The Bank had little in the way of uncommitted funds; there were other deserving countries which had not received any loans; and, the Greeks had not yet used any of the $25,000,000 credit granted in January. However, a Greek mission could be sent to Washington to discuss general economic problems, so long as it was understood that the Greek public was not given the impression that a loan was to be discussed.[32]

Despite this warning, the Greek mission which arrived almost immediately in Washington asked for a new Export-Import credit in the amount of $175,000,000. The State Department reported this to Truman, along with an account of the UNRRA aid which had already been given to Greece, and the fact that the January credit had not been touched. It was pointed out that the Greeks had been warned that no loan would be discussed. Truman met the mission and made it clear that any further aid would be dependent on Greek efforts to deal with its own economic problems. The mission left Washington empty-handed, although a month later credits of $35,000,000 were granted for the Greek purchase of American surplus war property.[33]

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[32]Harriman's telegram, 12 July, and State Department reply, 13 July, FRUS, 1946, VII, 180-182.

[33]Memoranda of Acheson and Baxter's memorandum, both 7 August, and State Department telegrams, 14 August and 7 September, FRUS, 1946, VII, 187-188 and n. 46, 190-191, and 201-202. There is no evidence of a connection between the visit of the Greek mission and the additional aid for the purchase of surplus property.

As the months went on, the British became more and more aware of the need of financial aid for Greece. After another telegram from Athens, officials of the Foreign Office and the Treasury met in late September to consider ways and means. It was hoped that the United States might be persuaded to provide reconstruction aid, although there was little chance that the Americans would share the cost of the maintenance of the Greek Armed Forces. This expenditure now amounted to the only financial aid the British were providing, but it was a burden which had been expected to end by mid-1946. With the increase in the guerrilla activity, it seemed impossible to withdraw or reduce the subsidy; in fact, far greater support for the armed forces was badly needed.

As a result of these discussions, Bevin sent a formal letter to Dalton, then in Washington. This recommended that a British promise to extend its support of the Greek Armed Forces until the end of 1947 be used as a lever to secure the largest possible American reconstruction loan. There was an implication that Dalton might begin negotiations with the Americans. The Chancellor sent word back to London to the effect that he wished action on this proposal deferred until his return. He saw little chance of any aid beyond March 1947.[34]

Without waiting for a reply from Dalton, Bevin wrote to Attlee asking permission to refer the question of the

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[34]Selby's minute, 17 September and Bevin's letter, 23 September, FO371/58767/R13693 and R14121; Trend's telegram, 4 October, and his letter, 3 October, 58768/R14969, R15437.

strategic importance of Greece and that of the amount of future support to be given it to the Chiefs of Staff. Attlee agreed and thus set in motion an extensive examination of the Greek problem which was to go on for the next four months. Considerable attention in the deliberations of the Chiefs of Staff was given to reports of a discussion on 15 October between A. V. Alexander[35], Minister without Portfolio (soon to become Minister of Defence) and Byrnes concerning Greece and Turkey. Byrnes expressed a definite interest in providing equipment for the Greek forces, and mentioned that he was sending an economic mission to Greece to study the long-term economic needs. The Foreign Office took Byrnes' statements as an indication that America would take a much greater interest in Greek affairs.[36]

The Chiefs of Staff almost immediately directed the Joint Planning Staff to prepare a detailed study for presentation at an early date. This resulted in two reports covering all aspects of the Greek problem.[37] So far as financial assistance was concerned, the Planning Staff

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[35]Albert Victor Alexander (1885-1965), Cooperative Society leader and long-time Labour member of Parliament; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1929-1931, 1940-1945, and 1945-1946; Minister without Portfolio, October-December 1946; Minister of Defence, 1947-1950.

[36]Bevin to Attlee, 30 September, and Attlee's reply, 1 October, FO371/58709/R14591; and Selby's minute, 11 October, 58731/R14873. The British report and discussion of this meeting are in 58658/R15770 and R15933. The only account found in American records is the memorandum given to the American Embassy in Athens by the British Embassy (FRUS, 1946, VII, 913-915).

[37]JP(46)199(Final), 4 November, and JP(46)204(Final), 11 November, FO371/58658/R16257, R16564.

strongly recommended continued British support of the Greek armed forces, along with a major effort to obtain as much American aid as possible. The Chiefs of Staff approved the two reports on 6 and 13 November, and recommended a conference to consider the implementation of the Planning Staff's views.[34]

Attlee ordered that the conference be postponed until Bevin (then in New York) and Alexander could be present. The matter came up again in the Chiefs of Staff meeting on 25 November, but Attlee this time stated that the matter required a major Cabinet decision which could not be taken in the absence of Bevin and Alexander.[35] No further reference has been found of discussion of the problem by the Chiefs of Staff or at Cabinet level until early January.

The Foreign Office was impatient to put pressure on the Americans. At about the same time the Chiefs of Staff were discussing the first of the two planning studies, instructions were sent to the Washington Embassy to tell Clayton, the senior economic officer of the State Department, that 'our main and perhaps only contribution towards assisting Greece in 1947 would be the supply of equipment to the Greek armed forces'. At first glance this would appear to be a threat of a major reduction in support, but it was followed by a statement that the British 'would do no more than look after the Greek armed forces and hoped the United States would look after economic rehabilitation.' Clayton

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[34] COS(46)163, 6 November, and COS(46)167, 13 November, CAB79/53.

[35] COS(46)171, 25 November, CAB79/54.

did promise to attempt to obtain some aid for Greece, but stressed that it was essential in making such a request to Congress to be able to state how much others [i.e., the British] were contributing.[40]

The possibility that the British were threatening to limit further aid to equipment is also weakened by a message to Washington of 19 November which stated that the Foreign Office was thinking of thirty to thirty-five million pounds aid to the Greek Armed Forces over a four year period, provided the United States contributed between twenty-five and forty million pounds in 1947 for reconstruction. A few days later London forbade the Embassy to use this proposal in any discussions with the State Department.[41]

In late November, in spite of a note from Attlee specifically forbidding action on Greek matters until Bevin and Alexander returned, the Foreign Office prepared a draft telegram to Bevin instructing him to approach Byrnes on aid to Greece. Attlee refused to approve the message on grounds that this might leave Bevin `in the position of half-promising that we will do any-thing, providing the Americans take up their load'. According to Hector McNeil, who discussed the draft with Attlee, `He was particularly sore because under the scheme we would still be left to carry the

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[40]The instructions were in Foreign Office telegram 10608, which has not been located, but its contents are inferred from Washington Embassy telegram 6755, 22 November, which also reports Clayton's reactions and an informal warning that Congress would expect the British to share in providing reconstruction aid (FO371/58659/R16975).

[41]Foreign Office telegrams 10957 and 11506, 10 November and 9 December, FO371/58658/R15942 and 58659/R16975.

political animus even if the Americans remain [sic] for the full amount.' The Prime Minister did agree that Bevin might see what ideas the Americans have. On 3 December, a telegram to this effect was sent to Bevin in New York, with Attlee's approval. The last paragraph read: `I [McNeil] think I should tell you that in my opinion the whole question of our policy towards Greece and Turkey is in the melting pot, and that there is a very great reluctance here to contemplate a continuation of our military, financial and political commitments in Greece.'[42]

Bevin replied almost immediately that he could not approach Byrnes as suggested; all he could do was inform him of the situation and urge haste in sending the proposed American economic mission. Bevin went on:

> The last paragraph of [your message] has come to me not only as a surprise but as a shock. The policy of the Government has been based hitherto on the assumption that Greece and Turkey are essential to our political and strategic position in the world and I have constantly had that assumption in mind in my conversations both with the US of A and Russia, and it has been one of the underlying assumptions in our negotiations for the peace treaties . . . . Am I to understand that we may now abandon this policy? I really do not know where I stand.[43]

McNeil's attitude in his message to Bevin is curious, in view of the recommendations of the Chiefs of Staff that aid to Greece should be continued, but some light is shed by a note of 9 December from McNeil to Sargent. Entitled `Two Points on Greek Affairs', it states:

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[42]McNeil's minute, 2 December, and Foreign Office telegram 2712, 3 December, FO371/58659/R17594.

[43]Bevin's telegram 2295, 5 December, *ibid.*, R17720.

EB very grumpy, but eased when told PM would not take action until EB returned.

My conversation with PM very straight forward, but he did say to me that he had another high military opinion which substantiated his doubts about our rightness.[44]

It is not clear whether Attlee or the Foreign Office was doubting whether Greece should be supported, but an uncontradicted minute written shortly afterwards in the Foreign Office points out the serious dangers of abandoning Greece.[45] It would therefore seem that Attlee was the dubious party.

5. Hints of a New American Attitude

While there were no further British attempts to involve the Americans until the beginning of 1947, there were some indications that help might be forthcoming. Shortly after the Bevin-Byrnes conversation in Paris in April, the British Embassy in Athens reported that conversations with the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires `leave the impression but no more that American assistance is not impossible'.[46] During the Paris Peace Conference of July-October, Byrnes and Bevin discussed the economic problems of Greece. Byrnes promised that the United States would try to help with economic aid, but no

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[44]*Loc. cit.*
[45]Williams' minute, 19 December, *ibid.*, R18501.
[46]Norton's telegram 1201, 27 May, FO371/58729/R7947; this file also contains a letter of the same date from H. Somerville-Smith of the Treasury expressing a similar view.

specific measures appear to have been mentioned.[47] Byrnes did initiate a new policy of aid for Greece at about this time, but no indication has been found that his discussions with Bevin were in any way responsible.

The Americans were slowly moving towards a more positive approach to involvement abroad during the first half of 1946, but the specific cause of Byrnes' change of attitude towards Greece was a new appraisal of the Soviet threat to Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean. This was the result of pressures on Turkey for bases in the Dardanelles and the return of border territories, which culminated in a strong Soviet note to the Turks on 7 August 1946, denouncing the Montreux Convention and making a thinly disguised demand for bases.[48] American concern for the eastern Mediterranean was increased with the shooting down of two U.S. Air Forces transport aircraft by the Yugoslavs in August, with the loss of American lives.[49]

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[47]Few details of the Byrnes-Bevin discussions have been found. Byrnes telegram to Acheson, 24 September, includes a statement that the Secretary was particularly interested in Greece and Turkey, and follows this with a mention of a discussion with Bevin on Turkey (FRUS, 1946, VII, 223-224). It would seem logical that they discussed Greece as well at this time. Acheson's telegram to MacVeagh, 8 November, recounts Byrnes-Bevin discussions concerning Greece during this conference, but all that is said about financial aid is to the effect that the United States 'would endeavor to strengthen the economic position of Greece (*ibid.*, pp. 262-263).

[48]The circumstances surrounding the Soviet note and the American reaction are set forth in FRUS, 1947, VII, 827-856; and in Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, pp. 359-363.

[49]Details of the Yugoslav incidents, which had a serious effect on Administration and State Department attitudes to the Soviet Union, FRUS, 1946, VI, 915-956.

As a result of this increased tension in the area, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff prepared a memorandum concerning the strategic importance to the United States of the Turkish straits. This pointed out the seriousness of the Soviet military threat to Turkey and its probable effects on the countries of the Near East. At the same time, a paper was written in the War Department on `U.S. Security Interests in Greece´, which stressed the importance of Greece to American security and recommended substantial economic assistance.[50]

A copy of the JCS memorandum and information concerning the War Department study were sent to the Secretary of State in Paris. Byrnes cabled back to Clayton, then Acting Secretary of State, expressing his agreement with the JCS paper and the conclusions of the War Department draft. He therefore wished that efforts be made to provide aid to both Turkey and Greece. Presumably before receiving Byrnes´ comments and instructions, Clayton sent him a letter referring to both the JCS and War Department papers, and enclosed a draft memorandum of a new policy towards Greece.[51] Byrnes approved the memorandum on 1 October, and a long cable was sent to MacVeagh, incorporating its main points. After

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[50]JCS Memorandum 1704, 23 August 1946, FRUS, 1946, VII, 857-858; the War Department paper has not been formally identified, but must be the undated memorandum prepared on 5 September and sent to the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee on the following day (*ibid.*, p.225).

[51]Byrnes´ telegram, 24 September, and Clayton´s letter, 25 September, FRUS, 1947, VII, 223-226. Clayton cabled Byrnes on the same day, but presumably after his letter had been sent, that the Department concurred completely with Byrnes´ views (*loc. cit.*). The memorandum, slightly revised, is printed in *ibid.*, pp. 240-245.

rehearsing the theme of a Soviet threat, the paper, shorn of vague promises of diplomatic support, amounted to a proposal to sell the Greeks arms if the British were unable to provide them; recommendations to the Export-Import Bank that loans to Greece be approved, if for sound purposes; and the dispatch of an economic mission to Greece.[52] There is no indication that the matter was discussed with Truman.

The economic mission had already been discussed at Paris by Byrnes and Tsaldaris. Its function was that of a fact-finding survey team, to determine Greek needs for reconstruction. The `Porter Mission´, as it was called after Paul Porter was made its Chief, did not arrive in Greece until mid-January 1947. It was still engaged in its investigations when the British finally decided to withdraw all financial support in February 1947.[53] The plan to send this mission to Greece must have given the British some hope of American aid for reconstruction, although it was evident from the beginning that any positive results would be a long way off. The vague statements of Byrnes at his meeting with Alexander must have also raised British expectations, but more indications were to come.

On 31 October, the Washington Embassy reported an interview with Loy Henderson, the Director of Near East

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[52]Byrnes´ approval, 1 October; State Department telegram to Athens, 15 October; and MacVeagh´s telegram, 17 October, concurring in the proposed actions; FRUS, 1946, VII, 233-235 and n. 3.

[53]Details of the Porter Mission are contained in FRUS, 1946, VII, 254-255, 257, 264, 266, 278; and FRUS, 1947, V, 16-22.

Affairs in the State Department. Henderson had just come from a discussion with Byrnes and confirmed that `inasmuch as Turkey and Greece were of strategical importance to the United States, the U. S. was clearly interested in Turkish and Greek affairs'. Henderson indicated that while it was understood that the British Government would be primarily responsible for military assistance, this did not mean that the United States would not be glad to examine the possibility of helping in this field. The proposed economic mission would shortly visit Greece, but there was no indication of the extent or type of economic aid which might be forthcoming. No loans would be made until the mission had reported. The British were invited to make suggestions as to how Greece might be helped, even with military aid.[54]

While Byrnes' decision to accept the memorandum amounted to a change in his policy towards Greece, M. S. Williams of the Foreign Office failed to see it as significant, because no specific promises were made. He commented: `The fact which emerges from this telegram is that in spite of Mr Byrnes rather airy assurance that we and the US should share responsibility for the military aid and civil reconstruction of Greece and Turkey, the State Dept have no clear

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[54]Washington Embassy telegram, 31 October 1946, FO371/67032/R1609. Henderson's comments to the British Embassy appear to be based on his own memorandum of 21 October, and a revision of the same date of the memorandum which had been forwarded to Byrnes in Paris. The meeting with the Secretary was probably the occasion for his approval of the final draft, which has a marginal notation that Byrnes approved it approximately 1 November. The question of aid for Greece, including loans, was also discussed at a conference of senior State Department officers, including Henderson, with Byrnes on 29 October (FRUS, 1946, VII, 240-245 and 255).

idea where the funds for the American share of such a plan are to come from.'[55]

December brought a flurry of indications of United States interest in Greece. On the 13th, MacVeagh told Norton that the State Department urgently wanted lists of equipment needed by the Greek armed forces. MacVeagh `expressed concern that his Government had woken up so late in the day to what was at stake in Greece'. According to Norton, he read out an urgent telegram he was sending to Washington telling the State Department that the United States Government `should be prepared without delay to provide Greece with up to $80,000,000 in cash or kind for 1947'. A delay until the report of the economic mission could be made might result in `general social collapse'. No evidence has been found in American records of a mention by MacVeagh of the need for this specific amount, but he did warn Washington at this time of the problem, using the phrase `inescapable consequences of social collapse'.[56]

This was followed by a letter dated 20 December 1946 from the American Embassy in London to Sargent, repeating the American concern for adequate military equipment for the Greek forces, and making an urgent request for lists of

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[55]Minute, 5 November 1946, FO371/58658/R15942.
[56]Norton's telegram, 14 December 1946, referring to a conversation with MacVeagh on the 13th, FO371/67032/R1609; MacVeagh's telegram, 14 December, FRUS, 1946, VII, 282.

needed *materiel*.[57] On 26 December, Norton reportd that MacVeagh had shown him two further telegrams from the State Department. One stated that eight Dakota (C-47) aircraft were immediately available to the Greeks if they were wanted. The other asked for lists of equipment needed on an urgent basis. MacVeagh added that in his view the State Department `would cool off´ unless the offer of help was quickly welcomed. Norton indicated that he was furnishing the Americans with tentative lists of equipment.[58]

The State Department did cool off. After considering MacVeagh´s telegram (the supposed eighty million dollar message), the Department notified him on 28 December that very little immediate financial aid could be expected.[59] The change of atttiude may have been due to British lethargy in providing the lists of equipment or to the extravagant tone of MacVeagh´s message, but it is more likely that it was the result of a visit of Tsaldaris to the State Department in late December. The Greek Prime Minister asked for fifty to sixty million dollars for the next three months

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[57]Gallman´s letter, FO371/67032/R1609. This resulted from MacVeagh´s telegram, 16 December, in which he emphasised the need urgent need of military equipment for the Greeks. He had obtained lists of Greek requirements, and asked the State Department to instruct the London Embassy to press the British for comments. Byrnes personally approved this request. FRUS, 1946, VII, 282-283 and n. 77. The British did not reply until 13 January, stating that no answer could be made until ´the whole matter has been considered by Ministers, which event the Foreign Office hopes would soon take place´ (Sargent´s letter to the American Charge d´Affaires, FO371/58768/R18414).

[58]Norton´s telegram, FO371/67032/R1609. The State Department messages are apparently those of 13 and 19 December, FRUS, 1946, VII, 278-279 and 283, n. 77.

[59]FRUS, 1946, VII, 285-286.

and a total of $1,246,000,000 over a five year period. The Department feared that Tsaldaris would `attempt to distort U.S. promises to "explore urgently possibilities of immediate as well as long term assistance" ´ to build his own position in Greek politics.[50]

These fears were probably reinforced by a visit of Lord Inverchapel, the British Ambassador in Washington, to Byrnes on 4 January. Inverchapel said that his Government was disturbed by a statement Tsaldaris had made to the press to the effect that he expected to receive aid from the Americans in the near future. The Ambassador was told that no commitment had been made, although the Greeks might try to get a loan from the Export-Import Bank. Even this was not viewed with much optimism.[51] No explanation is given as to why Inverchapel should be disturbed by the idea of an American loan to Greece; perhaps he was merely surprised that such an action should be contemplated.

Yet with all these negative indicators, there seemed great optimism in the Cabinet on 30 January when the Cabinet decided to make the major reduction in aid to Greece.[52] Great trust was placed in the single remark of Byrnes to Bevin in April and his slightly more encouraging response to Alexander in October. Perhaps Henderson´s story of a major change in State Department policy shortly after reinforced this view, despite M. S. Williams´ characterisation of it as `rather airy´.

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[50]State Department telegram, 3 Janaury, *ibid.*, pp. 286-288.

[51]Byrnes memorandum, 4 January 1947, FRUS, 1947, V, 1-2.

[52]CM(47)14, CAB128/9.

This interpretation of Byrnes' attitude is probably closer to the mark than the belief that his rather off-handed remarks to Bevin and Alexander constituted any commitment or real intention to provide significant aid. All that Byrnes promised Alexander was the supply of some equipment for the Greek armed forces and the dispatch of an economic mission which might recommend some reconstruction aid. Byrnes' new policy towards Greece which Henderson mentioned, perhaps a bit too enthusiastically, amounted only to the memorandum approved on 1 October, that is, diplomatic support, possibly the sale of some arms, and the economic mission.

There is no question that 1946 saw the beginnings of a major change in American foreign policy towards the Soviet Union, a change which might be expected to make the United States look more sympathetically towards aid to Greece, but only if that aid was needed to deter further Soviet expansion. In hindsight, with the knowledge of American actions and attitudes in 1947 and 1948, it would seem very logical for the British to expect assistance. In the autumn of 1946 or the early spring of 1947, this could not be clear to an outside observer of the American political scene; it was not that definite in the inner circles of Washington.

British leaders could not have been aware of Truman's 'I'm tired of babying the Soviets' letter to Byrnes in January 1946, they may have seen a slightly stronger attitude in Byrnes' Press Club speech of February. The Americans did join with the British in protesting against the Soviet delay in evacuating Iran. The only obvious

indicator of a major change concerned Germany. Clay's refusal to continue reparations from the American Zone in May, followed by Byrnes's offer for an economic merger of zones in July and his Stuttgart speech of September, amounted to a significant chain of events. By the first of October 1946, the Americans had made it clear that they would stand up to the Soviets with regard to reparations; they would begin the political and economic reconstruction of Germany with or without Soviet agreement; they would risk the division of Germany, and with it probably the division of Europe; and American troops would remain in Europe until occupation was over.

This last promise was the most important of all. Until this announcement, both Soviet and British leaders had operated under the assumption that the United States would withdraw its troops from Europe within two years of the end of the war, regardless of what settlements had or had not been made. This had been firmly stated by Roosevelt and never denied by Truman. Now the Americans had committed themselves to a long-term and anti-Soviet policy in Germany, there could be hope that the United States would take a similar view of other areas in Europe, including Greece. It would have been possible for the British to have seen Byrnes' discussion with Alexander and the `new policy' which Henderson mentioned to the British Embassy a few weeks later as a corollary of the new attitude to German affairs. It is more likely that Byrnes and the State Department were beginning to favour support of the British in Greece as a result of the Joint Chief of Staff paper of late August

which had been sent to Byrnes shortly after the Stuttgart speech.

While the strong American attitudes to the German problem were undoubtedly part of an increasingly anti-Soviet policy, it is questionable as to whether there was, by the end of 1946, a decision to initiate an active programme of opposition in other areas. The United States was already deeply involved in Germany and had to find a method of ending this involvement sooner or later. Greece was another matter. Only when it was deemed necessary to stop or roll back Soviet expansion and the spread of Communism would there be a logical reason to do more for Greece than a litle help in reconstruction, such as the twenty-five million dollar credit. It might be argued that this decision had been taken in the `new policy' of October, but it is difficult to accept this in view of the very minor actions this policy involved.

The British in early 1946 assumed that the Greek Government would gradually take over the costs of the Greek armed forces, and would somehow be able to begin reconstruction of the economy. Much of their sanguine view was based on hopes of stable government after the election and plebiscite, and, probably, a lack of appreciation of the true economic situation. While recognising the need for effective armed forces to restore law and order, and to provide some deterrent to invasion from the North, they could hardly have foreseen the problems raised by the `Third Round' of communist-led guerrilla activity, which began in mid-year. It was only then that the need for increased

expenditure on the armed forces was recognised, and, at that point, the scope of the problem was not understood. As late as January 1947, the British Joint Planning Staff believed that the `bandits´, as they chose to call the EAM, could be put down in six months active operations, after which the Greek armed forces might be reduced by as much as fifty percent. A month later, the Chiefs of Staff felt that `the back of the bandit opposition could be broken in a period of between two and three months´.[63]

Britain continued to accept that the support of the Greek armed forces was its own problem during most of 1946. Even if the Americans began a programme of reconstruction aid, it was extremely doubtful that they would contribute to the direct support of the Greek military.[64] This view is sound in the light of American policy papers of late 1946. The principle American objection to involvement in Greece was the danger of creating the impression that the United States had adopted a provocative policy with regard to `the Soviet Union and its Balkan puppets´.[65]

Despite several mentions in Foreign Office minutes of the desirability of American financial aid for Greece, it is

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[63]JP(47)5(Final), 25 January, DEFE4/1; Alexander´s letter, 27 February, FO371/67032/R2629.

[64]British policy and their view of American policy in this respect is perhaps best illustrated by Selby´s memorandum entitled ´Maintenance of the Greek Armed Forces´, 17 September 1946; and Bevin´s letter to Dalton, 23 September, FO371/58767/R13693 and R14121.

[65]For examples, memorandum, 21 October, and State Department telegram, 8 November, FRUS, 1946, VII, 240-245, 262-263.

logical to believe that the British Government would have preferred not to call on the United States for major support. A direct request to the United States to take over British responsibilities in Greece might well result in the loss of British influence in a critical area. There was probably the additional factor that an appeal for American assistance might create the impression that Britain was no longer a great force in international relations.[66]

The British Government appears to have been hoping that the United States would provide substantial assistance to their efforts to establish their post-war position in Greece, without demands for a special position of influence. A really substantial post-UNRRA grant, sufficient to rebuild the economy so that the Greeks could cope with their own problems, seems to have been the idea. The British therefore gave the United States full details on the Greek situation, and encouraged the Greeks to approach them directly, hoping for generous results from the Porter mission. At the same time, they held back from making a direct request for aid to the Greeks, especially with regard to a definite commitment of support for the Greek armed forces.

While the Americans were aware of the seriousness of the Greek economic situation, they did little to help. They had been instrumental in the provision of Red Cross aid throught the Swedish Government during the occupation, and

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[66]Sir John Balfour, British Minister in Washington, made a statement to this effect concerning a different aspect of the Greek problem in his letter to the Foreign Office of 8 August 1946 (FO371/61003/AN2922).

in the relief work of the Military Liaison agency immediately after liberation. They were major contributors to the resources of UNRRA which continued the relief work until early 1947. All of this aid was for the purpose of relieving actual suffering, and did nothing to rebuild the shattered Greek economy.

It is true that in June 1945, the State Department expressed concern over the Greek economic situation, and asked MacVeagh for his recommendations. The Department's only idea was to send out industrial experts to improve production and efficency. MacVeagh did point out that traditional current U.S. policy which was `restricted to general benevolence and trade promotion combined with strict non-intervention in internal matters' was ill-adapted to the existing world situation. So far as Greece was concerned, his suggestions were limited to the idea of supply raw materials and fuel through usual channels of trade [presumably at normal prices]. He doubted whether industrial experts would be of much value.[57] Early requests by the Greeks for aid were met with explanations that the shortage of supplies and transport made it difficult to help.[58]

MacVeagh's comment on traditional policy epitomises American attitudes towards Greece (and many other European

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[57]State Department telegram, 2 June, and MacVeagh's reply, 7 June, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 221-223.

[58]Grew's memorandum of his conversation with Greek Foreign Minister Sophianopoulos, 9 July, FRUS, 1945, VIII, 228-229.

countries) in 1945; it is a reflection of American foreign policy since the founding of the Republic. UNRRA aid was a `benevolence´; the idea of financial grants to a foreign country for its long term development was unheard of. Loans granted abroad with the aim of developing commerce were trade promotion. Help in establishing economic stability for strategic reasons was imperialism. In any case, Greece was a British problem.

Gradually, American policy began to change. The first non-UNRRA aid was the $25,000,000 Export-Import Bank credit which was the subject of negotiations from July 1945 until January 1946. This seems to have been a mixture of benevolence and trade promotion, since the State Department had expressed its approval of the idea when it was first broached, and long before the Americans had perceived a Soviet or Communist threat to the Middle East. The successive credits for the purchase of surplus property seem also to be benevolence, and, in any case, amounted only to authority to acquire equipment which might otherwise have been destroyed as no longer needed and too expensive to return to the United States.

While Byrnes' talks with Bevin in April 1946 apparently did indicate an American fear of Communism in Greece, they did not result in any economic aid. Even when Byrnes took note of the military studies of the strategic threat and as a result approved a new policy statement, specific help was limited to the promise of an economic mission to determine Greek needs. What had happened was a change in American attitude which meant a definite willingness to assist Greece, but only if the means could be found.

Chapter VIII

The Decision to Ask for Assistance and Its Effects[1]

1. The Cabinet Decision to Approach the Americans

At the beginning of 1947, time was running out for Britain, so far as Greece was concerned. It was evident that the `bandit´ operations would resume in earnest in the spring. Greece was going from one threat of economic collapse to another. Formal British commitments to support the Greek armed forces expired on 31 March, and a decision had to be made.

In late December 1946, the Chiefs of Staff prepared a paper stressing the strategic importance of Greece to Britain and recommending a reorganisation of the Greek forces. On the first of January, they signed a report entitled `Future Policy towards Turkey and Greece´. This examined British strategic requirements in the area; the role they wished the armed forces of the two countries to carry out in peace and war; and how assistance could be provided `by us and the Americans to the Greeks and Turks and the best method of approaching the Americans´. The

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[1]A brief and preliminary study of the topics of this and the following chapter is contained in Robert Frazier, ´Did Britain Start the Cold War? Bevin and the Truman Doctrine,´ *Historical Journal*, XXIII-3 (September 1984), pp. 715-727.

Chiefs saw the Greek armed forces as having two functions, the maintenance of law and order and that of a limited defence against aggression. In the existing situation, it was imperative that the `bandits´ be destroyed in a spring operation. The military leaders therefore wanted approval for an increase in strength, plus re-organisation and re-equipment of the Greek forces. For this purpose, `American assistance was essential´.

It was thought that American aid might best take the form of providing or paying for the cost of petrol and rations for the Greek forces, plus `general financial and economic assistance´. Petrol and ration provision would relieve the British of about half their expenditure. The Chiefs of Staff asked that the Foreign Office obtain the approval of the Cabinet as soon as possible for an approach to the United States. Bevin submitted a paper on the subject to the Cabinet asking for authorisation to approach the United States concerning the cost of the Greek armed forces after 31 March 1947, `with a view to sharing it´. It was essential to know how much financial, economic and military aid the United States might be willing provide during the next three years.[2]

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[2]DO(47)1, 1 January, and DO(47)2, 2 January, CAB131/4; FO letter, 11 January and JP(47)5, 25 January, FO371/67032/R1819; CP(47)34, 25 January, CAB129/16. While Bevin´s paper seems clear enough in hindsight, there is a hand-written note on the top margin: ´Mr Eastwood. Brief! Will you find out, if you can, what <u>is</u> recommended in this paper and set it out for the assistance of the P.M.´ The note is signed ´B´, presumably Sir Norman Brook.

On 29 January, J. W. Nichols of the Foreign Office reported that `private Treasury sources´ had indicated that Dalton would probably recommend that `. . . as it is absolutely out of the question for the U.K. to shoulder such a burden, we should cut our losses and abandon Greece´. A brief was prepared for Bevin´s use in next day´s Cabinet meeting. This included a note that even if the United State accepted a large share of the Greek armed forces costs, the British Government might have to bridge the gap entirely on its own, between 31 March and the earliest date of Congressional action.[3]

The paper was discussed in Cabinet, where Bevin proposed raising the strength of the Greek armed forces to combat the bandits. He discussed the tong-term future of these forces and the general economic situation in Greece `with a view to ascertaining what part of the burden they [the British] would be willing to bear´. Dalton recommended that there should be no financial commitment to Greece after 31 March.

The Cabinet agreed that the Greek armed forces should be strengthened in order to undertake operations against the bandits in the spring and that the Americans should be asked to help. The exact implementation was to be considered by a committee comprised of officials representing the Foreign Office, the Treasury, and the Ministry of Defence. They were to examine two matters:

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[3]Minutes, 29 January, FO371/67032/R2438.

(i) the financial implications of providing assistance to the Greek Government to enable their armed forces to undertake operations against the bandits, and

(ii) what proposals should be put to the United States Government with regard to long term financial, economic and military help for Greece.[4]

The new committee met two days later. It found itself confused by the Cabinet conclusions. Despite Dalton's recommendation that Greece be abandoned, the committee believed that it would be reasonable to assume that no final decision one way or another had been taken, and that the matter would have to be reconsidered in the light of any proposals the Americans might make. Sir David Waley, representing the Treasury, thought the Chancellor would accept this line.

The committee thought the Cabinet had agreed in principle that the Greek armed forces should be prepared to deal with the bandits in the spring, but that no decision had been made as to who should pay the costs. The committee was unsure as to whether action could be taken to approach the Americans without going back to the Cabinet, but believed that this could be done, so long as the appropriate drafts were approved by the Chancellor and the Minister of Defence.[5]

Before the committee met, the Foreign Office called in representatives of the American Embassy and gave them a misleading version of what had taken place. It was stated that the Cabinet had agreed in principle that Great Britain

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[4]CM14(47)4, 30 January, CAB128/9.
[5]Minute, 5 February, FO371/67032/R2439.

should provide further assistance to Greece beyond 3 March. The Foreign Office, Treasury, and Ministry of Defence would work out detailed British proposals which would be discussed with the American Government. A problem would arise `because financial assistance will end on 31 March and it is impossible that long-term proposals can be worked out until after [the] Porter report is made. It is essential that interim assistance be rendered "in order to stop the rot".'[6]

2. Preparation of the Request

The first draft of an appeal to Washington was prepared by the Foreign office on or before 4 February. It represented the position of that department, and presumably that of Bevin, in the heated battle between the Foreign Office and the Treasury which occurred in the next fortnight. The draft took the form of instructions to the Ambassador in Washington to present Britain's request to the new Secretary of State. General Marshall[7] was to be reminded of the conversations between Byrnes and Bevin during the Paris Conference in April and the Byrnes/Alexander discussions in October. He was to be given considerable information on the Greek economic situation and the British contributions up to March 1947, along with the statement that something between

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[6]Gallman's telegram, 31 January, FRUS, 1947, V, 13-14.

[7]George Catlett Marshall (1880-1959), Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, 1939-1945; Special Representative of the President to China, 1945-1947; Secretary of State, January 1947-January 1949; Secretary of Defense, 1950-1951.

sixty and seventy million pounds ($240 to $280 million) would be needed during the remainder of 1947.

The most critical points concerned Britain's proposed course of action. In view of their existing financial situation (of which no details were given), the British Government would be justified in providing no further expenditure on Greece. Marshall must be made to realise that if a joint policy of effective and practical support for Greece was to maintained, the U.S. Government "must bear the lion's share". Clearly, the Foreign Office was proposing a partnership. The instructions did not contemplate a complete withdrawal of aid to Greece if the United States would provide a significant portion of the support required. The draft assumed that the Americans were interested in, or even committed to, a joint policy of support for Greece, an assumption which is not borne out by American diplomatic records.

The entire draft appears to play down the danger of Communism. While it does refer to Byrnes' desire to prevent Greece from falling under Soviet influence, the word Communism is never used, and the bandit problem, while mentioned, is treated as a matter which was capable of early solution. The real emergency was portrayed as the danger of a collapse of the Greek economy. Nothing was said about the possibility of a gap arising betwen 31 March and the provision of American aid.[e]

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[e]The first draft (marked 'A' in the upper right-hand corner) includes some minor ammendments in Bevin's handwriting and is initialed by him at the end (FO371/67032/R1900).

There was also a draft message to Norton, referring to the approach to be made to the United States. This stated: `H.M.G. . . . cannot contemplate bearing unaided the futher costs of the Greek armed forces.´ A final decision would depend on the American reaction. A second draft changed the quoted sentence to: `H.M.G. . . . cannot say pending discussion with the U.S.G. what contribution if any they would make to bearing [the cost of the Greek armed forces]´. Both drafts included a statement that the Greek forces were to be built up in order to undertake the anti-bandit operation in the spring. Norton was instructed to notify the Greeks of the contents of the message, unless he had serious objections.[3] The inclusion of the phrase `if any´ is the first indication that the Foreign Office seriously considered complete abandonment of Greece.

Bevin and the Foreign Office were given some extra ammunition (and perhaps some additional worries) with the arrival early the next day of a long, but closely argued, telegram (No. 285) from Norton, who had been informed of the Cabinet discussion. This summarised the situation in Greece and pointed out a number of problems. Norton was doubtful that American aid would be sufficient even in terms of reconstruction assistance. Support to the Greek armed forces, even if they were not expanded to deal with the bandits, would `seem an unnecessary luxury to all but the best informed of American legislators´. He doubted whether American aid could be made available for at least four

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[3] *Ibid.*, R1900.

months. While no clear-cut recommendations were made, there was a definite implication that Britain would have to find more money for Greece from her own pocket if the country were to be saved. Bevin gave instructions that Inverchapel should show Marshall as much of the telegram as he thought advisable.[10]

On 11 February, Bevin sent a letter to Dalton reviewing the Cabinet conclusions of 30 January and the work of the committee responsible for further study of the problems. He enclosed the draft telegrams to Washington and Athens. In a postscript, he stated that he was in general agreement with the views in Norton's telegram 285.[11]

On the same day, Dalton addressed a letter to the Prime Minister (with a copy to Bevin) entitled `Greece'. Dalton began by saying, `The muddle about coal [the fuel crisis which was bringing the British economy to a temporary standstill] shows what happens through failure to look ahead'. He continued by saying that he must now sound a very definite warning on Greece. After reviewing expenditure on Greece over the years, Dalton said, `. . . in my view the time has come when we must refuse to enter into further commitments [on Greece].' Further on he said, `. . . we must, in my view, refuse to extend our commitments beyond 31st March. The only fresh commitment which I am willing to undertake is that we should supply such equipment as is available for attacking bandits, and should ask the Americans to supply the equipment which they have available and

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[10]*Loc. cit.*

[11]*Loc. cit.*

we have not.' Curiously, there is no mention of possible American assistance other than that of surplus equipment.[12]

Perhaps more significant is a handwritten note by Bevin on the top margin of the Foreign Office copy, `I think Mr Dalton is justified. We get no help from the Greeks. The whole area must be reviewed. EB'. Bevin wrote to Dalton three days later concerning this letter, stating, `In the circumstances, there does not seem to be much between us as regards the next step in Greek policy, and I hope that you will agree to the draft telegram to Washington immediately so that we may lose no further time in making our position clear to the United States Government.'[13]

3. Dalton's Intervention

Meanwhile Dalton had commented on the draft telegrams. In a letter of the 13th, he said, `. . . we cannot undertake this burden at a time when we know that we shall find it most difficult to feed, clothe, and employ our own people once we have used up the American and Canadian loans.' Dalton enclosed revisions of the proposed messages to Washington and Athens, without any further explanation of his reasons for amending them.[14]

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[12] *Ibid.*, R2443.

[13] *Loc. cit.* It is probable that this letter was never dispatched, since Dalton's letter of 13 February, enclosing revisions of the draft telegrams, arrived as it was being processed.

[14] *Ibid.*, R2440.

While Dalton accepted a great deal of the Foreign Office draft to Washington, he made two significant changes:

F.O. Draft	Treasury Draft
The U.S. Government will readily understand that in their existing financial situation H.M.G. would not be justified in incurring any further expenditure on Greece	In the light of the grave problem of overseas finance which we ourselves have to face, H.M.G. have decided that they cannot undertake any further commitments [to Greece].
Your aim should be to make General Marshall realise quite clearly that if a joint policy of effective and practical support is to be maintained, the U.S. Government must bear the lion's share of the burden . . . .[15]	Your aim should be to make General Marshall realise quite clearly that our financial assistance to Greece has been all and more than all we can afford and that we cannot undertake any further commitments. If a policy of effective and practical support for Greece is to be maintained, the U.S. Government must now bear the financial burden.[16]

Dalton eliminated a sentence in the Foreign Office draft which read: "On receiving such indications [of American intentions to help], H.M.G. would consider how best they could contribute to a joint Anglo-U.S. policy of economic and military support to Greece."

The draft telegram to Athens was also changed. In addition to emphasising that H.M.G. could not undertake any further expenditure, Dalton's version gave firm instructions that the Greeks were to be informed that there would be no British aid after 31 March, instead of allowing Norton to use his judgement on this point. Dalton did include a promise to provide two million pounds worth of equipment in

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[15] *Ibid*, R1900.
[16] *Ibid.*, R2440.

order that the spring anti-bandit campaign could be undertaken.

The reaction of the Foreign Office was unhappy. M. S. Williams saw the critical point as follows:

> The main difference between the Foreign Office and the Treasury is of course that the Treasury think we should give no further financial help to Greece under any circumstances whatever, whereas the Foreign Office think that the final decision on this point should only be taken after we know what the Americans are prepared to do. I should have thought that if we are to have discussions with the Americans, as the Cabinet direct we should have less chance of securing an adequate contribution from them if we adopted an entirely negative attitude in regard to the possibility of further support from us than if, in the opening stages at least, we left the position open.

Williams recommended that Bevin discuss the matter with Dalton on a personal basis in an attempt to persuade the Chancellor to agree to send the original drafts.

C. F. A. Warner, the Assistant Secretary supervising the Southern Department, expressed his agreement with Williams and added: `Our way commits the Chancellor to nothing and is mainly a matter of diplomatic tactics on which I think the SofS [Bevin] should have the last word.' He continued: `To tell the Greeks that we will do nothing before the U.S. have considered what they will do would be to precipitate a Greek collapse.'[17] Bevin approved these ideas and sent a letter to Dalton, incorporating, in more tactful phrases, the ideas of Williams and Warner: `for the purposes of negotiation with the Americans, I should be reluctant to state categorically during the opening stages that we should under no circumstances be prepared to make

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[17]Minutes, 14 February, *ibid.*, R1900.

any further contributions . . . .' He sought an early meeting with the Chancellor.[18]

4. The Final Decision and the Delivery of the Note

The only official record of the final decision as to the form the approach to the Americans was to take is a memorandum drafted or dictated by Bevin. According to this, Dalton came to see the Foreign Secretary on the morning of 18 February and Bevin `dealt with the problem of Greece'. Dalton insisted on his own version of the telegrams to Athens and Washington, with `the idea being to bring the Greeks right up against the problem'. According to Bevin's memorandum of the conversation,

> He [Dalton] does not object to going to the Cabinet again after the discussion in America, but I agreed in both instances that we should put up a strong telegram to the United States asking them what they were going to do and on the other hand telling the Greeks that we could not continue, for the sole purpose of bringing matters to a head.[19]

In other words, Bevin, even though pressed by his staff to oppose Dalton's changes, gave in. His memorandum gives no further explanation for his action. The question does arise as to what significance should be attached to the

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[18]15 February, *ibid.*, R2440.

[19]Memorandum dated 18 February, *ibid.*, R2443. There is a handwritten question mark opposite 'I agree in both instances'. It is possible that what was meant was 'I agreed in both instances with his suggestions that we should put up . . . .' Bevin's account of this decision disagrees with that of Dalton not only in substance, but in the time and place of the meeting, the matters discussed, and the attitudes of each. These discrepancies are examined in detail in Chapter IX, Part 2.

phrase `sole purpose´. It is just possible that this means that no final decision had been made to abandon Greece, but that Bevin had agreed to Dalton´s telegrams only as a means of putting drastic pressure on the Americans.

The following day, Foreign Office staff informed the American Embassy that conversations between the Treasury and the Foreign office concerning Greece had not yet resulted in agreement on a document to be sent to the State Department, but it was hoped that it would be ready within a week. The Embassy reported: `Due to British financial straits, the Treasury is against "pouring any more money down the Greek drain," but the Foreign Office is willing to do so for political reasons. The Foreign Office is not sanguine of gaining its point.´[20] This report is at variance with the agreement between Bevin and Dalton of the previous day, perhaps because Bevin´s capitulation had not yet been disseminated to the working level.

The ultimate versions of the telegrams were prepared in accordance with Dalton´s versions. They were finally dispatched in the early hours of the next morning, Thursday, 20 February.[21] The general impression of Foreign Office attitudes that day is one of attempts to find other sources

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19 February

[20]Gallman´s telegram, FRUS, 1947, V, 26-27.

[21]Telegram 1634 to Washington, FO371/67033/R2969; telegram 384 to Athens, *ibid.*, R2970, both 20 February.

of aid and pessimism as to the outcome of the approach to the Americans.[22]

The Washington Embassy had to turn the telegram[23] from London into an Aide-Memoire to be given to the Americans as a record of the remarks Inverchapel would make to Marshall, a matter which required considerable re-writing. A number of instructions in the telegram had to be deleted, and some points had to be re-cast in more diplomatic language. For example, the statement in the telegram `the United States must bear the burden' was changed to `His Majesty's Ambassador is instructed to express the earnest hope of His Majesty's Government that, if a joint policy of effective and practical support for Greece is to be maintained, the United States will agree to bear . . . the financial burden . . . .'

The Embassy, apparently on its own initiative, added a sentence as an introduction which was in no way hinted at in the telegram: `His Majesty's Government are giving most earnest and anxious consideration to the important problem that on strategic and political grounds Greece and Turkey should not be allowed to fall under Soviet influence.' This

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[22]These are summed up in Williams' minute, 'Financial Assistance to Greece', 20 February 1947, FO371/67033/R275. Ideas included appeals to the Dominions for aid to Greece, strenuously objected to by Dalton; and large-scale international loans (*ibid.*, R2823, R2751, and 67035/R3442).

[23]There were two telegrams and two Aide-Memoires to be prepared, since the British Government added the problem of support to Turkey to the appeal for Greece. The Turkish aspects of the actions leading to the American decision to initiate the major aid programme and the Truman Doctrine will not be examined.

seems at variance with the Foreign Office tendency to play down the danger of Communist aggression; it probably reflects the Embassy's view of what might be a convincing argument for the Americans.

The conversion of the telegram into the Aide-Memoire was an extremely competent piece of work, considering the apparent lack of background available to the Embassy on what had been taking place in the Foreign Office in the past week. Inverchapel was apparently not involved in the re-drafting, since he was absent from Washington for most of the day.[24]

The following morning,[25] Friday, 21 February, Inverchapel tried to obtain an appointment with Marshall to deliver the message, which was described as urgent. Acheson, temporarily in charge of the State Department, pointed out that Marshall had left Washington shortly before, and that 'unless he went to Princeton or North Carolina he could not catch General Marshall until Monday

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[24] He was making an official visit to Annapolis, Maryland (*The* (Baltimore) *Sun*, 21 February 1947).

[25] Despite the statement in Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen* tried for an appointment 'that gray afternoon', it seems clear that the attempt must have been made in the morning. Inverchapel spent the afternoon and evening of 21 February in Baltimore, where he and Alger Hiss received honorary degrees from Johns Hopkins University (*The* (Baltimore) *Evening Sun*, 21 February 1947). Adding to this the fact that Washington was digging itself out from under eight inches of snow 'that gray afternoon', it seems doubtful that Jones had any first hand knowledge of the event.

morning'.[26] Acheson suggested that the Embassy deliver a carbon copy of the message so that the State Department could take immediate action. Formal delivery by Inverchapel could wait until Monday. Sometime later that day, H. M. Sichel, First Secretary of the British Embassy, delivered a copy of the Aide Memoire to his appropriate opposite number, Loy Henderson, Director of Near East Affairs.[27]

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[26]Marshall attended a degree ceremony at Columbia University in New York City that afternoon (*New York Times*, 22 February). According to his itinerary, he left Washington by railway at 8:00 on 21 February, and in the evening travelled again by train to Princeton, New Jersey, where he attended another degree ceremony the following day, returning to Washington late on Saturday evening (*Marshall Papers*, file entitled: 'Secretary of State, Miscellaneous, Columbia and Princeton Universities). The quotation above from Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1969), p. 217, implies that Marshall went from Princeton to North Carolina for the remainder of the weekend. The itinerary cited reflects that Mrs Marshall left their home in North Carolina on the evening of 20 February to join her husband, and did not intend to return to North Carolina on the 23rd; there seems no reason for Marshall to have gone there. Acheson's account must be treated with discretion, at least as far as detail is concerned.

[27]Despite the apparent unreliability of both Jones and Acheson concerning the events of 21-23 February, State Department records make it clear that a copy of the Aide-Memoire was delivered to Henderson on 21 February (FRUS, 1947, V, 32). Inverchapel's meeting with Marshall on Monday was an anti-climax. Instead of making an impassioned plea to Marshall as the telegram from London instructed, he seems to have merely waited while Marshall read the message and stated that he recognised the urgency and importance of the matter. Marshall was already aware of the contents of the message and had been advised by Henderson to limit his comments to no more than this (Henderson's two memoranda, 24 February, *ibid.*, pp. 42-44).

5. Norton's Rebuttal

Shortly before midnight, the Foreign Office received an urgent telegram (No. 462) from Athens. Norton was appalled by the message of early Thursday instructing him to tell the Greeks that aid would be terminated on 31 March. He opened with the statement that, upon consultation with the heads of the British misssions in Athens, the British General Officer Commanding in Greece, and other representatives,

> We are agreed that it is our duty to make sure before I inform Greek Government of His Majesty's Government's decision, that the latter fully understands what will be its direct consequences.

After discussion of the Greek financial position, and prediction of the collapse of the Greek Government and economy, Norton continued:

> It follows that His Majesty's Government's decision is practically certain to cause collapse before American help can be given. Thus by stopping our own financial help so soon after we have appealed to the United States Government we shall in fact be making American help impossible, because it must come too late.
>
> I venture with all deference to suggest that to make this irreparable move without fullest consultation with United States Government would give them every reason for serious resentment.
> . . . . . .
>
> I earnestly trust therefore that it may not be too late for this decision to be reconsidered and for His Majesty's Government to accept the sterling cost of maintenance of the Greek armed forces . . . at least until the end of June in order that the position may be held until American help can become effective.

> I fully realise that the decision has not been taken lightly but in view of our own economic straits.[28]

The Foreign Office appreciation of the situation the next morning was written in the light not only of Norton's pleas, but of the contents of a letter dated 21 February from A. V. Alexander, the Minister of Defence.[29] Alexander reported the concern of the Chiefs of Staff at the effect of the 'Treasury decisions' and made a strong appeal for money for the anti-bandit campaign, which meant at least interim aid. The Chiefs of Staff estimated that once action began in the spring, the back of the bandit operation could be broken in two or three months.[30]

After these two documents had been given careful consideration, Sargent recommended to Bevin that he return to Dalton and ask that he agree to a new approach to the United States. This would amount to the British providing a sum of perhaps six million pounds to the Greeks in order to cover the costs of the spring bandit campaign, against an under-

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[28]Norton's telegram, received in London 11:10 p.m., 21 February, FO371/67032/R2524.

[29]Curiously, there is no evidence that the Defence Minister was ever consulted concerning the draft telegrams to Washington, although the special committee recommending the action had clearly stated that he should be (*supra*, p. 291).

[30]Alexander's letter, FO371/67032/R2629. It is suggested that the Chiefs of Staff were being misled by some of its sources in Greece. In July 1947, the British Charge d'Affaires in Athens, in a private letter to a Foreign Office official, said, 'For some considerable time we in the Embassy have thought the British Military Mission were inclined to be over-optimistic about the prospects of the bandit war.' The British Military Attache seems to have agreed with the Embassy on this point (Patrick Reilly's letter to G. O. Wallinger, 31 July, FO371/67072/R10767).

taking that the money would be repayed from the funds the Porter Mission would recommend for Greece. The notification to the Greeks should be suspended until this proposal could be discussed with the Americans. A letter to Dalton along these lines was drafted, but never sent. A note in the file dated a week later indicates that Bevin eventually raised the matter with the Chancellor and the Minister of Defence, probably referring to a meeting on 24 February discussed *infra*.[31]

There was no objection in the Foreign Office to Norton's refusal to inform the Greeks of the decision. It was only hoped that Inverchapel, in the light of Norton's telegram (a copy of which he received on the 22nd), would delay his meeting with Marshall. The carbon copy of the message was already delivered to the State Department, but Inverchapel, apparently acting on his own initiative, asked Marshall on the 24th not to reveal the British decision to the Greeks.[32]

Thus ended the week. The decision to end all aid to Greece within six weeks had been taken. The announcement of the decision and the plea for American aid had been made. At first glance there was nothing more for the Foreign Office to do except wait for the American reply. In actuality, there was to be no respite from the Greek problem.

On Sunday, Attlee, having seen Norton's telegram, asked for the views of the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of

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[31]Minutes, 22 February, FO371/67032/R2629.
[32]Henderson's memorandum, FRUS, 1947, V, 44.

the Exchequer.[33] On the 24th (Monday),[34] Bevin, Dalton, and Alexander met to discuss Norton's telegram. It was decided to say nothing to the Greek Government until the American intentions became clear and to undertake a review of the question of interim aid between 31 March and the date American aid became effective. There was no thought now of planning for a possible complete refusal by the Americans. On the 28th Christopher Warner sent a letter to the Treasury saying that it had been decided (apparently at the meeting of the 24th) to take the Greek matter back to the Cabinet once the American views were known. It stated:

> It would make nonsense of the Cabinet decision [to prepare the Greek forces for the anti-bandit campaign] and this statement [the reiteration in the telegram of 19 February to Athens to build up the Greek forces] if we made no effort to bridge the gap for a month or two.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> If the Americans are prepared to carry the burden, thereafter, should we not infuriate them if we refuse to fill the gap in this way?

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[33]FO371/67302/R2451.

[34]The evidence for this meeting is in the draft reply to Attlee's enquiry, which bears three different dates. At the head of the draft 23 February (obviously wrong from content) has been crossed out and replaced by 26 February. After the drafter's initials at the bottom is written 25/2. Since the draft says the meeting was 'yesterday', and says that the decision is incorporated into telegram 1765 of 24 February [which was dispatched at 10:45 p.m., 24 February], it seems logical that the meeting was held on the 24th. The actual letter sent back to Attlee is dated the 26th, and states that the meeting took place on the previous day, but the content still refers to the decision of the meeting being reflected in the telegram to Washington of the evening of the 24th. Draft reply, letter to the Cabinet Office, and telegrams, *loc. cit.* The dating of this meeting becomes significant in connection with Dalton's account of his meeting with Bevin, discussed *infra*, p. 318.

> There is no need to reply, I only want to save time when the American reply is received by putting this to you now.[35]

In analysing the Foreign Office evidence, it is quite clear that none of its personnel involved in the problem of Greece, from the Permanent Under Secretary down, considered the possibility of stopping all aid. They were fighting a losing battle with Dalton. From 30 January they were trying to implement a Cabinet decision which was inherently contradictory, and seemingly impossible if the Americans should refuse aid. They had little room to manoevre, and even their small amount of diplomatic leverage was taken from them by Dalton's insistance on announcing the complete cessation of aid without waiting for an American response.

They made a great effort to encourage Bevin to stand up to Dalton, and pressed Bevin to persuade Dalton to reverse his view, to no avail. There is a clear impression that the Foreign Office staff had only one idea in mind--to preserve the Greek Government and economy in the British interest. Bevin's own attitude does not emerge so clearly. He appears to support his officials, to agree to their proposals, and to be of one mind with them. It is only at his meeting with Dalton on 18 April that he did not put up a fight. It is essential that an explanation be sought to determine what actually motivated Bevin in taking the decision to abandon Greece and in aquiescing in the transfer to American primacy, a matter taken up in the following chapter.

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[35]*Loc. cit.*

6. The American Reaction

The American reaction to the British note was immediate.[36] The State Department staff worked throughout the weekend to analyse this new development, going to considerable trouble to assure themselves that the British were entirely sincere in their message.[37] A recommendation was prepared for the President to the effect that the United States should accept the responsibility for Greece and step into the British shoes. This was accepted by Truman five days later, and immediate action was taken to obtain the support of Congressional leaders. The prospect of success was unfavourable, with control of both Houses in the hands of the opposition Republicans.

On 27 February, Truman invited senior members of both political parties to the White House to explain the problem and to ask for their support. According to Acheson and

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[36]Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, provides a detailed account of the State Department and White House actions from the receipt of the British note up to the passage of the enabling legislation. This is supplemented by Acheson's memoir, *Present at the Creation*. There are flaws in both accounts, most of which are minor, except for the question of Acheson's intervention at the Cognressional briefing of 27 February, discussed *infra*, pp. 310-311. Truman's account in his memoirs is brief and uninformative.

[37]The American tests for sincerity are discussed in detail *infra*, pp. 325-327.

Joseph M. Jones,[38] Marshall made a poor presentation of the proposal. It was so ineffective that Acheson was moved to intervene with an impassioned speech which emphasised the threat of Communist expansion into Asia Minor and Europe if Greece were allowed to fall. As a result, Senator Vandenberg[39], the opposition spokesman on foreign policy, is supposed to have pledged Republican support for the Administration plan, with the proviso that Truman should repeat the substance of Acheson's speech to the full Congress.[40] The written record of Marshall's remarks shows that he made a lucid and emphatic appeal, and no other participant in the meeting mentions Acheson's outburst or Vandenberg's promise, but there must have been some contribution from Acheson

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[38]Joseph M. Jones (1908-____), a publicist and former associate editor of *Fortune* magazine, and Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs in 1947. Jones was responsible for writing the Truman Doctrine speech, and was involved in most of the internal discussions within the State Department which led up to it. He was not in a policy making position.

[39]Arthur H. Vandenberg, Sr. (1884-1951), U. S. Senator, 1928-1951; former isolationist; in 1947, majority leader (senior Republican member) of the Senate.

[40]Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 219; Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 139-142. Jones's account is far more detailed, but his source for these details is not known. There is no evidence that he was present at the meeting.

stressing the Communist threat, and some suggestion by Vandenberg that it be emphasised to Congress.[41]

Joseph Jones, in his account of the events leading up to the Truman Doctrine, makes it clear that there was unanimity within the State Department and amongst Truman's advisors that idealogy must be made the main issue. In his words, there was complete agreement that:

> "The only way we can sell the public on our new policy is by emphasizing the necessity of holding the line: communism *vs.* democracy should be the major theme."[42]

While the Truman Doctrine speech of 12 March used the words communism and Communist only once (to describe the leaders of the revolt against the Greek Government), its stress on the evils of totalitarianism in Poland, Roumania, and Bulgaria made it clear that the main theme of the speech was an atttack on communism. It was equally evident that Congress, the American press, and public opinion viewed it in the same way, whether the doctrine was approved or criticised.[43] There is little doubt that this appeal for

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[41]Marshall's presentation, FRUS, 1947, V, pp. 60-62. Truman (*Memoirs*, II, 109) fails to mention either Acheson or Vandenberg as making any contribution; Senator Tom Connally, in *My Name is Tom Connally* (New York: Crowell, 1954), p. 318, fails to mention Acheson, and states that Vandenberg made no commitment to support Truman. The latter later stated that no member of Congress made any commitments at this meeting (*The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, ed. Arthur H. Vandenberg, jr. (London: Gollancz, 1953), p. 339). Acheson's contribution is also questioned by Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Statesman 1945-1959* (New York: Viking, 1987), pp. 164-165.

[42]*The Fifteen Weeks*, p. 151.

[43]Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-198, presents a summary of the press, public, and Congressional reaction; a fuller analysis is in the unpublished Ph.D. dissertation of Bernard Weiner, 'The Truman Doctrine,' pp. 150-172.

support in a fight against the evils of communism was responsible for the speedy passage by a large majority of both Houses of Congress of the bill providing for extensive aid to Greece.[44] It thus marked the beginning of the idealogical crusade against the Soviet Union, although the intensity of the American confrontation was not fully displayed until the proclamation of the doctrine of containment in George Kennan's 'Mr "X" Article' four months later.[45]

In determining the significance of Greece to the coming of the Cold War, an essential question concerns the results of the British decision to withdraw. More critical in assessing its significance is the problem of whether it had a major effect on the break-down of East-West relations. Was the Truman Doctrine merely a well-publicised incident in a long series of events, or does it mark the turning point in post-war international relations, the beginning of the Cold War?

Probably a majority of specialists would agree that the Truman Doctrine marked the actual beginning of the Cold

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[44]The Act was passed by the Senate on 22 April by a vote of 67 to 23; and by the House on 8 May by 287 votes to 107. It became law with Truman's signature on 22 May.

[45]'The Sources of Soviet Conduct,' *Foreign Affairs*, XXV-4 (July 1947), pp. 566-582. Kennan was not involved in the formulation of the Truman Doctrine speech and disapproved of it on a number of grounds (See his *Memoirs, 1925-1950*, (New York, Bantam, 1969), ch. 13), but his objections were not made public until long afterward. It was generally assumed that the Truman Doctrine was part and parcel of the containment policy.

War.[45] It was the first time the divergences between East and West were tied firmly to ideology, rather than to Russian imperialism alone. The spectre of Communism had been raised many times before, but it was only in the Truman Doctrine that the foreign policy of the United States was directed against an ideological movement, rather than being based simply on opposition to Soviet expansionism and obstructionism. It was assumed without question that EAM was directed and controlled supported by the Soviet Union. This emphasis on ideology which was to polarise the Cold War in inflexible lines, and to prevent, for twenty years or more, any productive negotiation between East and West, which gave the confrontation its distinctive character. 'Ideology, the curse of the Cold War', is not too strong a description.

A second factor was simply that of money. For the first time since World War II the United States Congress appropriated large sums in peacetime for the specific purpose of opposing a foreign power, money which was to be used for military as well as civil purposes. This is all

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[45]Authorities who either subscribe to this view entirely, or emphasise the signficant change in American foreign policy which it brought about include: R. V. Burks, 'Truman Doctrine and Greece,' *Balkan Studies*, VIII-2 (1967), pp. 452-456; Averill Harriman, 'Leadership in World Affairs,' *Foreign Affairs*, XXXII-4 (July 1954), pp. 525-540; Robert M. Hathaway, *Ambiguous Partnership* (New York: Columbia University press, 1981), pp. 301-303; Roy Jenkins, *Truman* (London: Collins, 1986), p. 101; Wilfred Knapp, *A History of War and Peace* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 109; Kuniholm, *Origins of the Cold War in the Middle East*, pp. 420-421; Walter Lippmann, *Isolation and Alliances* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1952); Harold Macmillan, 437 *Parl. Deb.*, col. 1944, 16 May 1947; and Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), p. 275.

the more significant since that Congress was not only isolationist, but especially economy-minded, and under the control of the anti-Administation political party. The President and the administration could make as many policies as they liked, but they would have no effect unless the resources to implement them were available.

It is questionable as to whether the Marshall Plan, the containment programme, or NATO would have come about without the Truman Doctrine; or, for that matter, the Czech coup or the Berlin Blockade. This may not be capable of proof, but it is difficult to believe that the course of events after March 1947 would have been the same without the Truman Doctrine.

Not everyone agrees. The most striking example of an alternate view is the article entitled 'Was the Truman Doctrine a Real Turning Point?', by John L. Gaddis.[47] Gaddis puts the decision to resist further Soviet expansion one year before the Truman Doctrine, that is in February-March 1946. He attributes it to political pressures from Congress and the public, along with the effect of George Kennan's 'long telegram' of 22 February, and believes the decision is evident from a series of events which followed. These include 'Truman's tacit endorsement' of Churchill's Fulton speech on 5 March, 'blunt public opposition to Soviet demands on Iran and Turkey', termination of German reparations shipments, Soviet opposition to the Baruch plan, and the growing strength of Byrnes' negotiating tactics at the

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[47] *Foreign Affairs*, LII-2 (January 1974), pp. 386-402.

Council of Foreign Ministers meetings in Paris and New York and the Paris Peace Conference.

Gaddis relies to a large extent on the Iranian incident, quoting a 1951 statement by George Elsey, a White House advisor in 1946, "So far as foreign policy is concerned, President Truman . . . `blew the whistle on the Communists' a year earlier than [February 1947]. At his direction, the United States took the lead in March 1946 in the United Nations when Iran was first threatened by the Soviets."[48] Elsey apparently refered to the refusal of Byrnes to allow the Iranian issue to be withdrawn from the Security Council deliberations after the Soviets had reached a tentative agreement with the Iranians to evacuate their troops. This resulted in Gromyko walking out of the Security Council.

Gaddis elsewhere suggests that Byrnes was not attacking the Soviets as much as he was using the incident to impress on the public that the policy of appeasement had been abandoned. He does emphasis the story that Byrnes earlier sent a strong note to the Soviets protesting their actions in Iran. This has echoes of Truman's statement in his memoirs, and in numerous interviews from 1952 onward, that he sent Stalin an ultimatum to get his troops out of Iran, an allegation which seems completely disproved. Certainly, the note Gaddis refers to is far from being an ultimatum. Perhaps the best that can be said for the importance of the

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[48]Gaddis cites this statement from Elsey's letter to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., 15 October 1951, George M. Elsey papers, Box 104, Harry S. Truman Library.

Iranian incident is that Truman's continual references to it in later years shows how much of an impression it made on him and his staff.[49]

In suggesting that the real decision was made in early 1946, Gaddis cites as supporting evidence only the Elsey quotation; a reference to his earlier work, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*; and three government documents. The earlier work posits `a decisive turning point in American foreign policy' in late February and early March 1946. This is seen as the result of such factors as conditions in Roumania and Bulgaria, the Iranian matter, Soviet pressures on Turkey, attacks on Truman's foreign policy by Republican legislators (in particular, Senator Vandenberg's highly critical speech of 26 February), Stalin's election speech of 9 February, the announcement of the Canadian atom spy discovery on the 16th, and the Kennan `long telegram'.[50]

The first of the three government documents is a Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum, `Basis for the Formulation of a U.S. Military Policy, `27 March 1946. It is a study prepared in September 1945 which was under consideration by various governmental committees until well into 1948, without ever being approved. While it stressed the need for a

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[49]The circumstances of American relationships with Iran in this period and rebuttals of Truman's suggestion of 'an ultimatum to Stalin' are provided in FRUS, 1946, VII, 331-383, and especially 348-349; and Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, pp. 303-335, and especially pp. 320-321. The suggestion that Truman placed great emphasis on the incident in later years is that of Kuniholm, *ibid.*, p. 321.

[50]New York: Columbia University Press, 1972, pp. 282-315.

well-defined military policy, there is no mention of a Soviet threat. The second, also a Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum, `Foreign Policy of the United States,´ 29 March 1946, does recognise a Soviet threat, but says only, `". . . the adoption of a firm and friendly attitude in our dealings with the Soviet Government" is strongly endorsed with, however, the emphasis on "firmness".´

The third document is a State Department memorandum in reply to a Joint Chiefs of Staff request for `a political estimate of Russia and, so far as possible, an outline of future United States policy with reference to Russia, and any requirement for its implementation on the part of the armed forces.´ In this document, entitled, `Political Estimates of Soviet Policy for Use in Connection with Military Studies,´ 1 April 1946, the State Department saw no evidence that the Soviet Union desired a major war, but felt its expansionist policies might extend beyond the point `which Great Britain or the United States could tolerate.´ The only recommendation for implementation of the estimate was to `reconstitute our military forces´ so that they might be prepared to ´resist Soviet expansion by force if necessary in areas of our own choosing should such action prove necessary . . . .´[51] None of these contain indications of a major change of foreign policy.

Gaddis sees the Truman Doctrine as significant only in that it was the first time special appropriations were

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[51]FRUS, 1946, I, 1160-1171.

needed to carry the administration's new policy, and therefore the first time the Congress had to be asked to sanction the new policy. He suggests that the feeling of participants such as Acheson and Jones that the Truman Doctrine marked a major change was the result of decisions being made 'quickly, efficiently and decisively', rather than the importance of the decisions.[52] The Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, NATO, and the Military Assistance Program, in his view, were attempts to achieve a largely psychological goal, the restoration of faith in democracy among Europeans. In Gaddis's view, this programme might have led to 'a multipolar world operating on balance-of-power principles'. It was only the North Korean invasion of June 1950 which led to a full and seemingly irreversible confrontation with the Soviet Union.

Gaddis's article is an incisive analysis of American foreign policy *vis-a-vis* the Soviet Union from 1945 until 1950 which counters the generally held view that the United States in 1947 adopted a rigid and unquestioning policy of opposition to the Soviet Union. There is much to be said for his insistence that the administration had hopes that the policy adopted during 1946 and early 1947 would lead to some sort of detente with the Soviet Union, that the clear and public proclamation of firm and appropriate action to be taken would force the Soviet Union to reconsider further

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[52]In a more recent work, *The Long Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 56, Gaddis points out that the British note forced the United States to 'move beyond attempts to discourage Soviet expansion by rhetoric alone'. This would appear to make the Truman Doctrine some sort of turning point.

attempts at expansion. But, the actions taken to implement the new American policy were not of the nature to make this clear to the Soviets, or to the peoples of the West. If Gaddis is correct in his hypothesis concerning Truman's real intentions, he has summed up the Truman Doctrine speech well in calling it, along with Kennan's 'X' article, 'excellent examples of the obfuscatory potential of imprecise prose'.[53]

The resort to the ideological crusade of the Truman Doctrine; the division of Europe into two camps by the Marshall Plan, if not by the formation of Bizonia and the Stuttgart speech; and the 'X' article resulted in a firm, if possibly erroneous, belief on all sides that battle had been joined. Admittedly, the Marshall Plan was offered to the Soviet bloc, but on terms which could not be accepted; Kennan did make it clear that the 'X' article was not meant to lead to confrontation, but his explanations came long afterward.[54]

One can accept Gaddis's view that there was a turning point in early 1946 in American attitudes, but this does not vitiate the proposition that the Truman Doctrine was also a turning point; one of far greater importance in the development of American foreign relations. It marked the first implementation of a policy designed to oppose the expansion of Communism backed with Congressional approval and the

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[53]'Harry S. Truman,' in *Makers of American Diplomacy*, ed. Frank J. Merli and Theodore A. Wilson (New York: Scribners, 1974), II, 203.

[54]Kuniholm, *op. cit.*, pp. 420-421, also objects to Gaddis's thesis on the Truman Doctrine, but with a rather different analysis than that above.

appropriation of funds. It was also the first decision to provide military aid to another country in peacetime (other than Lend-Lease); as such it must rank at least equally with the decision to use military force in peacetime, which is the distinguishing feature of the Korean War.

For that matter, the decision to resist the North Korean invasion was a logical corollary of the Truman Doctrine, even if the latter had not always been applied. Failure to support Chiang Kai-Shek could be excused for a number of reasons; a refusal to go to the aid of South Korea would have left both the Doctrine and the concept of containment in tatters. There was no lengthy period of decision making, or of sounding out Congress with regard to Korea; Truman simply applied the policy he had adopted long ago.

Gaddis´s doubts as to whether the Truman Doctrine was meant as a firm and unyielding commitment to anti-Communism are logical, but they do not minimise the effect of the British withdrawal of aid to Greece on the development of American foreign policy and the Cold War. Whatever qualifications lay behind the rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine speech did not lessen the full impact of that statement as a firm commitment to confrontation with the Soviet Union on an idealogical basis backed by military and economic aid. The British note of 21 February 1947 was the immediate factor which initiated the Cold War, whether it was intended as such or not.

7. The American Reply and the Problem of Interim Aid

The eagerly awaited American reply to the British note came formally on 1 March, although American journalists had the information as early as 27 February.[55] Curiously, the State Department notified the Greeks before the British. The Greek Charge d'Affaires, Paul Economou-Gouras, was called to the State Department on 28 February and told that Britain was unable to continue aid to Greece, but that Truman and Marshall had decided to take steps to provide a long-range programme of economic assistance. The Greeks were not told at this stage that Britain was stopping *all* financial aid. Henderson, in giving the news to Gouras, termed the decision a step unparalleled in American diplomatic history. Gouras immediately cabled Athens, and was instructed to get in touch with the British Ambassador in Washington. Sir John Balfour, Minister Counsellor of the Embassy, told the Greek diplomat (presumably on 1 March) that only an exposition of the need for American support had

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[55] The first report was that of James Reston, 'Truman Asks Aid to Greece; Britain Unable to Bear Cost,' *New York Times*, 28 February. This was copied by most British newspapers, beginning with the *Evening Standard* of 28 February. Reston's story must have come from a Congressman present at a briefing by Truman on the morning of the 27th (FRUS, 1947, V, 60-62) or from an off-the-record press briefing given by Marshall or Acheson that evening (*ibid.*, p. 67 and n. 2).

been presented to the State Department and that no requst had been made to the United States.[56]

The American haste in talking to the Greeks seems to have been designed to ask the Greeks to send a request of their own for large-scale aid, probably to avoid any assumption by Congress and the public that the Americans were bowing to British demands.[57] Sir John Balfour's remarks are curious, but are perhaps an attempt to avoid a definite statement pending instructions from London. Hector McNeil, then in New York (and perhaps not *au fait* with what was going on in London), was asked that same day by the press about rumours of the British note on Greece. He commented, 'Britain is in constant communication with the United States about our economic commitments in Greece, but has made no direct effort to transfer them.'[58]

Lord Inverchapel was called to Acheson's office on the morning of 1 March and handed the reply. This stated in effect that the President had decided to extend aid, both to maintain Greek integrity and to develop a sound economy. As the Foreign Office had feared from the beginning, it was

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[56]Xydis, *Greece and the Great Powers*, pp. 478-481, citing records of the Greek Embassy in Washington and the Greek Foreign Office. The meeting is mentioned without detail in the State Department telegram to Athens, 28 February (FRUS, 1947, V, 69).

[57]As it was, there were a large number of complaints to the effect that Truman's decision to offer aid was a matter of 'pulling British chestnuts out of the fire', including some very insulting remarks by isolationist members of Congress. The unpublished dissertations by Barbara D. McFayden, 'The Truman Doctrine,' University of Colorado, 1965, and Bernard Wiener, 'The Truman Doctrine,' Claremont Graduate School, 1967, survey the anti-British comments.

[58]*Daily Herald*, 1 March 1947.

pointed out that Congressional action would require some time. The United States trusted that the British Government would continue such financial aid as might be necessary to prevent a Greek collapse.[58]

This brought the matter of interim aid to a head in London. On 3 March, the problem was taken up by the Defence Committee of the Cabinet. While Dalton opposed interim aid, particularly on the ground that American Congress would not accept the proposal Truman was introducing, it was decided to grant the Greeks a loan of two million pounds per month for three months (i.e., for April, May, and June).[59] Inverchapel announced this decision to the State Department the next day. He pointed out that he was instructed to impress upon the U.S. Government that it would be impossible to incur any further expenditures beyond these loans. It was also made clear that the interim aid would cease at the moment American aid became effective.[61]

This was not the end of the matter. The British Ambassador returned to the State Department on 8 March to point out that London had now informed him that the British government expected these loans to be repaid by the Americans or by the Greeks from money received from the United States. Acheson pointed out that the American attitude to this would be unfavourable and that it would be a mistake for the British to press this point. He became more

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[58]Acheson's memorandum, 1 March, FRUS, 1947, V, 71-73.

[59]DO(47)6th, 3 March, CAB131/5.

[61]Acheson's memorandum and British Aide-Memoire, 4 March, FRUS, 1947, V, 79-81.

definite when Inverchapel saw him again on 14 March. The United States administration had no authority to guarantee reimbursement of the loans before Congress had decided to approve an aid programme to Greece. It would be an unnecesary burden to add such a proposal to what was going to be a very difficult task of convincing Congress that money should be appropriated for Greece. Instead, the British should accept this charge. Acheson also asked for an assurance that the British Military and Naval Missions would remain in Greece.[62]

This attitude was not to save the United States money, but part of a general policy with regard to aid to Greece. A message of 11 March to the Athens Embassy stated that one of the State Department's main aims was to `. . . make it clear to the U.S. public and the rest of the world . . . that any aid extended to Greece is in the interest of world peace and is not to assist in carrying on any British policy in Greece.'[63]

The matter of the three month's interim aid was finally settled in London. On 17 March, the American Ambassador-Designate (Douglas) and the Charge d'Affairs (Gallman) called on Attlee, who was acting as Foreign Secretary while Bevin was in Moscow. Attlee stated that he had just been informed by Dalton that the interim aid would be extended to the Greeks as a British gift.[64]

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[62]Acheson's memoranda, 8 and 14 March, FRUS, 1947, V, 105, 116-117; Washington Embassy telegram 1613, 14 March, FO371/67035/R3483.

[63]*Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.
[64]*Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

This left the problem of the retention of the British Service Missions in Greece. It was discussed in Cabinet on 20 March, when it was decided to attempt to persuade the United States to pay these costs, or to have them paid by the Greeks from American aid money.[65] Bevin took the problem up with Marshall on 18 March during the Moscow Conference,[66] and brought it up again on the 22nd. He confirmed that the three-month interim aid would now be borne by the British, but stated that there were major difficulties in obtaining money for the continued support of the missions. Britain had now committed eighteen million pounds for interim aid after 31 March, and it would be very difficult to go to Parliament for additional money for the missions.[67]

Unless Marshall, the source of this report is in error, Bevin was either confused, or attempting to deceive. The British Government had in all committed nine million pounds for interim aid, two million of which was a gift of equipment and one million a release of blocked Greek funds, leaving only six million pounds to be appropriated by Parliament. It is true that the British administration had recently been forced to obtain a supplemental appropriation

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[65]CM30(47), CAB128/9.

[66]Bevin's telegram 176, 18 March, FO371/67036/R3708. There is no mention of this conversation in FRUS, 1947, II or V.

[67]Marshall's 'Notes on a Conversation with Mr Bevin,' FRUS, 1945, V, 128-129. No British report of this conversation has been found.

of nineteen (not eighteen, as Bevin said) pounds for Greece, but this was for extra funds committed before 31 March.[65]

On 11 April, Marshall, still in Moscow, received a letter from Bevin reiterating his hope that the United States would permit the Greeks to pay for the missions in dollars from American aid money. Marshall asked Acheson for advice on how to reply. Acheson pointed out that the Greece-Turkey aid bill now in front of Congress had a proviso to the effect that no funds could be used by a recipient country to make payments of the principle or interest on any loan made by a third country. An attempt to bring up the matter of the missions would only lead to stronger Congressional action to prevent any such use of the money. Acheson suggested that the message came not from Bevin, but from Dalton, and indicated that he was asking Douglas in London to make a vigorous attempt to change the Treasury view.[66]

Acheson also discussed the matter with the British Embassy in Washington, who reported that the Acting Secretary of State was in a state of high agitation on the subject. Marshall wrote a strong letter back to Bevin. Douglas in London made representations to McNeil who promised to attempt to persuade the Treasury to withdraw the request. McNeil did write to Dalton, but the issue had been

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[65]Details of the purposes of the £19,000,000 appropriation in 431 *Parl. Deb.*, col. 1766, 14 March 1947; and *The Times*, 15 March.

[66]Marshall's telegram, 11 April, and Acheson's reply, 12 April, FRUS, 1947, V, 141-144; Dalton's letter to McNeil, 8 April, confirming Acheson's suspicions, FO371/67039/R4931.

decided a day earlier by Attlee. On 17 April, he wrote a one sentence note to Dalton, saying that in view of a message from Bevin explaining the views of the American Congress, the demand for payment of the missions costs should dropped.[70]

Dalton next day wrote a strong letter to Attlee. While he had to accept the decision, he objected vehemently, and complained that the Foreign Office did not understand the gravity of the situation. Attlee wrote at the bottom of this, `Noted. C.R.A.' On 23 April, Marshall received a letter from Bevin saying that the British would continue their missions, without payment from the United States.[71] This seems to have ended the arguments over British financial contributions to Greece.

8. The Transfer of Patronage

In the aide-memoire of 1 March informing the British that the American administration intended to assume the Greek burden, quite a point was made of demanding assurances that the British Government would `continue, to the extent of its ability, fully to cooperate in supporting the political independence and territorial integrity [of Greece

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[70]Washington Embassy telegram 2210, 12 April, FO371/67040/R4989; telegrams of Douglas and Marshall, 14 and 15 April, FRUS, 1947, V, 145-146; McNeil's letter to Dalton, 18 April; Attlee's minute (based on Bevin's telegram 788), 17 April, PREM8/528.

[71]Dalton's letter, 18 April 1946, PREM8/528; Bevin's letter, FRUS, 1947, V, 148-149.

and Turkey]'. This was followed by an even stronger note on the same subject from Marshall personally, which added a request for joint discussions of the problems of Greece and Turkey, `as well as problems of common concern in Europe and Asia.' A few days later, the importance of British support to the American intervention in Greece was stressed at a high level meeting of British and American officials in London. The Foreign Office was puzzled by this development and relieved when the American pressure on the matter faded away.[72] Within a few weeks, the Americans were acting as if they intended to proceed without British diplomatic assistance.

Even before 22 May, when Congress passed the bill authorising the required aid to Greece, the American Ambassador in Athens was applying pressure on the Maximos Government to take action against right-wing terrorism and the State Department was demanding immediate economic reforms.[73] From this time on, the American Embassy continually made specific suggestions as to how the Greek Government should conduct itself in almost every aspect of political and economic affairs, while trying to avoid the charge of interference.

In August-September 1947, the Maximos Government resigned, to a large extent because of American pressure for

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[72]The two aides-memoire of 1 March, and Gallman's telegram, 17 March, FRUS, 1947, V, 72-73 and 123-124; FO371/61033/R2820.

[73]MacVeagh's letter to Maximos, 11 April; State Department telegram, 16 April; and Athens telegram, 25 April, FRUS, 1947, V, 142-143, 146-147, and 151-152.

a coalition representing more fully the two broad streams in Greek politics, the republicans and the royalists. In the intricate maneouvering towards for the formation of a new administration, MacVeagh and Dwight Griswold, the head of the new American aid mission, carried out continual discussions with every prominent political leader, making it clear that the United States was insisting on full cooperation. In view of the deteriorating civil war situation and the implied threat of withdrawal of the newly available economic aid, it is not surprising that the Americans succeeded where the British had failed. A new coalition uniting the two main strands of Greek politics was formed, which endured for over two years.

Direct British involvement in Greek politics ceased almost immediately after the Truman Doctrine speech. There were no more joint representations to Greek Ministers by the British and American Ambassadors which had often occurred in the past. When Bevin in late July 1947 tried to explore an offer of the Greek Communists of a truce in the civil war, he asked that the American Ambassador be instructed to accompany his British counterpart in asking the Greek Government to consider the proposal. The Americans turned Bevin down almost out of hand, on grounds that the KKE offer was insincere.[74]

There was a considerable amount of cooperation between the British and the Americans on military matters. The British Military Mission remained in Greece for the duration

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[74]State Department telegram, 18 July, and Athens telegram, 21 July, FRUS, 1947, V, 243-244 and 250-252.

of the civil war, and, initially, had full responsibility for the training of the Greek Army. Even after the Americans had established an extensive military advisory force, the British mission continued to assist the Greek forces. For this reason, important decisions regarding the strength and organisation of the Greek army were usually taken in conjunction with the British, or, at least, after consultation.

The question of the retention of British combat troops in Greece gave rise to strong, if not violent, disagreement. Britain had reduced its force in early 1947 to one brigade of about 6,000 men, and had announced to the Americans that this formation was to be gradually withdrawn during the year. They amounted to a token force whose ostensible function, after the plebisicite, was to counterbalance Soviet forces in Bulgaria until the peace treaty with that country was finally ratified. It was generally accepted within and without Greece that their continued presence would deter any attempt of the Soviets or their satellites to invade Greece in support of the communists. The Americans believed that their retention was essential to a successful prosecution of the civil war, although British troops were never used against the guerrillas.

In August 1947, in the midst of the British convertibility crisis, Bevin suddenly announced that the troops were being withdrawn immediately. This led to an argument between Bevin and General Marshall which lasted until late November, perhaps after Palestine the most serious dispute between the two powers in the post-war decade. The motives

of neither side are clear, although it would appear that Bevin was using the threat of withdrawal in an effort to obtain more support for Britain in non-Greek affairs, such as interim aid until the Marshall Plan came into effect, or an American assumption of the dollar costs of the German occupation. Bevin finally gave in, probably having achieved his goal, and the British troops remained in Greece until early 1950, by which time the civil war was over.[75]

The economic and military aid promised by the Americans soon began to arrive in Greece. The amounts of each had to be increased constantly, because two years of hard fighting by the Greek government forces under American direction were required to end the civil war.[76] The initial reconstruction monies provided by the Truman Doctrine Act were supplemented substantially by the Marshall Plan, so that by late 1949 Greece was well on the way to economic recovery, if not relative prosperity.

This suggests that the American assumption of the Greek burden was a major success, at least so far as the effect on Greece is concerned. The only counter-argument is that of some historians who see the long period of both British and American patronage as unwelcome and deleterious intervention

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[75]This dispute is examined in detail in Robert Frazier, 'The Bevin-Marshall Dispute of August-September 1947 concerning the Withdrawal of British Troops from Greece', in *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War 1945-1949*, ed. Lars Baerentzen, John O. Iatrides, and Ole L. Smith (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculum Press, 1987), pp. 249-261.

[76]The arguments that the end of the civil war was directed by Stalin, or was brought about by the Tito-Stalin rift, rather than being the result of American aid and advice, are not within the scope of this work.

in Greek affairs, intervention which resulted in right-wing or centre-right domination of Greek politics for a lengthy period. In the extreme view, the American intrusion paved the way for the Colonel's coup of 1967.[77] It must be accepted that the Americans did not always make the inculcation of full democratic ideals and safeguards their primary concern; their actions were motivated almost entirely by the fear of the spread of communism. If they did not whole-heartedly implement the goals of the Declaration on Liberated Europe which first brought them into the affairs of Greece in 1946, they did not deliberately foster reaction and semi-dictatorship. The alternative to their intervention was almost certain economic chaos, the probable victory of EAM, and, at best, a Soviet client state.

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[77]The long-term effects of the American presence are examined by Richard Clogg, *A Short History of Modern Greece* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), ch. 7; Maurice Goldbloom, "United States Policy in Post-War Greece," in *Greece under Military Rule*, ed. Richard Clogg and George Yannopoulos (London: Secker & Warburg, 1972), pp. 228-254; John O. Iatrides, "American Attitudes towards Greece," in *Greek American Relations*, ed. Theodore A. Couloumbis and John O. Iatrides (New York: Pella, 1980), pp. 49-73; Keith Legg, *Politics in Modern Greece* (Stanford University Press, 1969), chs. 3 and 9; Lawrence Stern, *The Wrong Horse* (New York: Time Books, 1977); and Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece*, ch. 10. Of the above, only Stern and Wittner suggest that the overall effect of American influence was harmful.

Chapter 9

British and American Motivations

1. Why Did Britain Withdraw?

The British decision to end all financial aid to Greece resulted in the Truman Doctrine which in turn led to the Marshall Plan and NATO; it may well be considered the impulse which began the Cold War. In the words of one historian:

> February 21 was thus a historic day. On that day, Great Britain, the only remaining power in Europe, acknowledged her exhaustion. She had fought Philip II of Spain, Louis XIV of France, Kaiser Wilhelm and Adolf Hitler of Germany. She had preserved the balance of power which protected the United States for so long that it seemed almost natural for her to continue to do so.[1]

Whether the delivery of the note marked the complete exhaustion of Britain is debatable, but there is little doubt that it resulted in a major departure in the course of American foreign policy, probably the most significant change since the founding of the Republic.[2] At the same time, the American acceptance of responsibility for Greece represents the culmination of its slowly changing attitudes

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[1]John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (London: Pall Mall, 1962), p. 29.

[2]This contradicts some other authorities, notably John L. Gaddis, "Was the Truman Doctrine a Real Turning Point?" The validity of the statement will be defended later in this chapter.

towards that country, and the effective transition from British to American patronage.

It has been generally assumed that the British Government abandoned Greece unwillingly and unexpectedly, only because there was no alternative; the great fuel crisis of early 1947, along with the approaching exhaustion of the American loan, compelled a drastic reduction in external expenditure. At the same time, there are suggestions that financial exhaustion was not the real reason for the decision. As an example:

> While the Brussels Treaty was being hatched, Bevin was also hatching a rather tricky plan to involve the United States in defence responsibilites in Europe, in the first place in Greece.[3]

This implies that Britain, on 21 February 1947, suddenly announced that she was withdrawing aid from Greece, not because she could no longer afford it, but in order to apply maximum pressure on America to provide active support in the defence of the West. A third view, particularly evident in American thinking at the time, is that Bevin was forced to abandon Greece because of pressure from the left wing of the Labour Party. The records of the Foreign Office suggest that the withdrawal from Greece was not the result of a definite decision taken in an atmosphere of panic or as part of a deliberate diplomatic manoeuvre. Instead, it was the result of long-term discussions within and amongst several government departments, in which strategic factors as well as financial necessity influenced the outcome.

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[3]Elisabeth Barker, *Britain in a Divided Europe* (London; Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971), p. 68.

2. The Financial Motive--Dalton's Evidence

The majority of authorities accept the financial motive, usually basing their views on the evidence of Hugh Dalton and accepting it as proof that he forced Bevin to agree to withdraw all aid; therefore, financial necessity was the only significant factor. Dalton provided two versions of his involvement in the matter, that in his diary and a section of his memoir published some years later. A close examination of these two accounts reveal that neither tallies with established facts on a number of points, particularly when compared with the evidence of the Foreign Office files.

Dalton described, in dramatic fashion, a meeting at which he forced an unwilling, perhaps unwitting, Bevin to agree to a withdrawal of all aid from Greece and a simultaneous appeal to the Americans to accept the burden. Dalton does admit that he himself did not realise the full significance of his action at the time, but he gives the strong impression that he was responsible both for the idea of withdrawing aid, and the decision to approach the Americans.[4]

Taken at face value, this is indeed strong evidence for a purely financial motive. Unfortunately, there are too many discrepancies in Dalton's version to make it of any significant value. Dalton did not record his account of what had happened until three weeks after the event, when he

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[4] *High Tide and After*, pp. 207-208; and his diary entry for 14 March 1947.

In the long run, discrediting the evidence of Dalton's memoir and diary has no effect on the evaluation of Bevin's motives for the withdrawal. It is obvious from the Foreign Office files that Dalton was pressing Bevin to abandon Greece; these files show how compelling his influence was in the final decision to withdraw all aid, not a portion of it. Dalton's two accounts are so confused as to be worthless; but the fact that they have been taken by many authorities to constitute proof of a financial motive does not weaken the probability that this was the major reason for the decision. Britain was in a difficult financial position, and Dalton was determined to reduce foreign commitments.

The examination of Dalton's accounts and their comparison with the official record gives rise to the question of why he took such an uncompromising attitude to the question of financial aid to Greece. Only a small amount of money (and that sterling, not hard currency) could be saved by Dalton's insistence on a complete withdrawal of aid, as opposed to making some compromise arrangement of substantial reductions. A compromise was the course of action proposed by the Foreign office, and approved by the Cabinet in the 30 January decision.

It is almost as if Dalton had some fixed idea that aid must be withdrawn from Greece, not for reasons of financial exigency, but because of irrational dislike of the Greeks. His attitude in February 1947 towards aid for Italy, or to proposals for post-UNRRA relief in general, seems one of cooperation and attempts to do as much as he can;[e] when it

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[e]Bevin's memorandum, 18 February, FO371/67032/R2443.

came to Greece he had a closed mind. The following statements made by Dalton in the period November 1946 to late April 1947 should be considered:

> I am also resisting suggestions from the F.O. to spend large sums on Greeks, Turks and Afghans. I sent a minute to the P.M. saying that we have not got the money for this sort of thing and that even if we had, we should not spend it on *these* people.[9]

> We should cut our losses and abandon Greece.[10]

> And I would begin at once by cutting off the Greeks.[11]

> The Chancellor was willing [to re-examine the question of aid to Italy], but he again emphasised that he could not go on pouring money into Greece.[12]

> I had for a long time been trying to put an end to our endless dribble of British taxpayer money to the Greeks.[13]

> We must finish with the Greeks--financially--now![14]

> I regard the Greeks as a very poor investment for the British taxpayer.[15]

The last two of these were added in ink above the signature to letters on interim aid to Greece, as if Dalton felt the letters themselves were not strong enough. These seven quotations are not proof that Dalton disliked the Greeks,[16] but he did seem to single them out for more drastic measures

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[9]*High Tide and After*, p. 171, discussing events of 29 November, italics in the original.

[10]Minute, 29 January, FO371/67032/R2438.

[11]Memorandum, 11 February, FO371/67032/R2443.

[12]Bevin's memorandum, 18 February, FO371/67302/R2442.

[13]Diary, 14 March 1947.

[14]Letter, 8 April, FO371/67039/R4931.

[15]Letter, 18 April, FO371/67040/R5397.

[16]Kenneth O. Morgan, *Labour People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 127, suggests that Dalton had been hostile to the Greeks since the Chanak incident of 1922.

than any other one nation when he was trying to reduce expenditure.

Dalton's insistence on the ending of all aid might have seriously endangered the entire operation to persuade the Americans to take up the task. There was a strong possibility that the United States would not agree unless the burden was shared. While it does not seem to have been considered at the time, Dalton's policy could (and, to a large extent, did) lead to a loss of all significant British influence in Greece. His initial insistence on notifying the Greeks that all aid would be cut off before the American response was known might well have led to a complete collapse of the Greek Government, as Norton forecast.

On the other hand, it could be argued that Dalton's insistence on making the withdrawal complete, rather than partial, was a clever move to ensure American acceptance. Any partial withdrawal coupled with a request that the United States make up the difference could be seen in anti-British circles in America as `pulling the British chestnuts out of the fire' or as entering into `an entangling alliance'. Perhaps it was more likely that the Americans would give substantial aid only if they did not have to share the resulting influence and any glory with the British. The lack of any indication that this was in Dalton's mind and the statement in his memoirs that he did not realise the actual significance of the decision makes this idea dubious. The immediate American reaction to the note on this point was a set of demands that the British pledge themselves `to continue, to the extent of its ability, fully to cooperate in supporting the political

independence and the territorial integrity of Greece and Turkey'.[17]

3. Other Evidence for the Financial Motive

The only official explanation for the withdrawal is a brief statement in the House of Commons on 17 March 1947, after a number of searching questions arising from the Truman Doctrine speech and earlier rumours that British aid to Greece was to be ended. Hector McNeil, acting for the Foreign Office in Bevin's absence in Moscow, stated, `His Majesty's Government decided, after full and anxious review, that they could not enter into any substantial commitment for Greece after 31st March, ...'[18]

Lord Inverchapel, who delivered the British message to Marshall, seems to have been confused concerning the motivation for the withdrawal. On 10 March, prior to the Truman Doctrine speech, but well after the general tenor of the note on Greece was known, a speech of his included:

> Let me say at once that Britain's domestic problems have nothing whatever to do with the recent announcement to leave India in 1948, to negotiate a new treaty with Egypt, or to set up a constituent assembly in Burma. Perhaps they have had something slight to do with the need to reduce our very heavy commitments in Greece, but not nearly as much as has been made out.[19]

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[17]Acheson's memorandum and two Aides-Memoire, all 1 March, FRUS, 1947, V, 72.

[18]435 *Parl. Deb.*, col. 16, 17 March.
[19]Full text in FO371/61000/AN1174; report in *New York Times*, 11 March, 'Gloomy Reports Denied by Briton'.

Inverchapel continued by saying that he did not intend to go into detail concerning any of these matters; in other words, he did not explain what the real reasons were for the withdrawal of aid from Greece. While this seems good evidence for a non-financial motive, Inverchapel, five days after the Truman Doctrine speech, said:

> I am prepared to concede that we have overdone all this public expenditure abroad. In fact, we have. That is why we have had to come here and ask your Government to take over our financial responsibilities in Greece and Turkey.[20]

It could be argued that Inverchapel knew when he delivered the British note on Greece that the motive was not really financial; and that he based his speech of the 10th on this knowledge, only to receive instructions from London to change the tenor of his public statements. This would require a belief that Bevin had some other reason for the withdrawal, but failed to provide appropriate instructions for Inverchapel with regard to public announcements until sometime after 10 March.[21]

The Foreign Office prepared comments on the matter for inclusion in Attlee's weekly letter to the King, the Royal Family then being on a tour of South Africa. It included, '. . . owing to our general financial position, we have felt that we could not continue to carry the burden . . . .' and '. . . our inability to continue the necessary financial

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[20]Speech, *New York Times*, 18 March.

[21]The Foreign Office analysis of the 10 March speech suggests only that the Ambassador was being slightly optimistic (FO371/61000/AN1174).

support'.[22] In the 21 March draft of a letter to be sent to the Dominions, the Foreign Office stated:

> In view of our financial difficulties Mr Bevin agreed that our policy towards Greece must be so conducted towards Greece as to eliminate the burden which it has hitherto imposed on the British taxpayer.[23]

Finally, Bevin, replying to a strong attack on his foreign policy at the Labour Party Conference on 29 May 1947, stated, `We had to tell the world that we could not carry on in Greece any longer. The Chancellor said he had reached the end.'[24]

The public statements of the British participants, except for Inverchapel's speech of 10 March, give financial necessity as the only reason for the decision. They are in every case brief and lacking in detail; and in no case, unless perhaps in Inverchapel's speech of 17 March, do they seem to rule out another possibility. They are what one might expect if they were concealing the real motivation.

4. The American Opinion of British Motives

The Americans did question the sincerity of the British note, but pushed their doubts aside. The only explanation they had for the withdrawal of aid was the sentence in the British note of 21 February, which read, `The United States Government will readily understand that His Majesty's Government, in view of their own situation, finds it

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[22]Colville's letter, 13 March 1947, FO371/67035/R3467.

[23]FO371/67035/R3442.

[24]*Labour Party Conference Report, 1947*, p. 179.

impossible to grant further financial assistance to Greece.' The note did not give any details of the actual financial problems of Britain at the time; the `situation' might well have been a diplomatic or strategic one rather than financial.

Acheson prepared a memorandum transmitting the British note to the President in which he said, `I believe the British are entirely sincere in this matter . . . .'[25] The same day the State Department asked the London Embassy to comment on the `sincerity and accuracy' of the British statements. The Charge d'Affaires replied, `there was no no reason to doubt the British sincerity "in the light of Britain's over-extended foreign policy and serious financial plight, plus political pressure within the Labour party . . . ."'[26] A few days later, a senior State Department official visiting London confirmed Gallman's view and told Washington that after visiting the Foreign Office and reviewing their telegrams from Greece, he ~~belived~~ believed `. . . the seriousness of Britain's own financial situation resulted in the failure of Bevin to rally any support whatsoever against Dalton in the Cabinet in favour of continuing any financial aid to the Greek Army after April 1.'[27]

The most detailed analysis of British motives was that made by a special committee of the State Department, formed to study the problem of aid to Greece and Turkey. Its report of 25 February stated:

> The argument might be advanced that the British are not entirely sincere in presenting the

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[25]24 February, FRUS, 1947, V, 44-45.
[26]FRUS, 1947, V, 47, n. 7, and 68, n. 3.
[27]Matthews' telegram, 28 February, *ibid.*, p. 68-69.

proposals contained in these notes; that the world situation will compel them to continue aid to Greece and Turkey regardless of what we might or might not contribute; and that the notes have been pushing the United States to assume the financial and other economic burdens which otherwise must be borne primarily by Great Britain. It might also be suggested that Great Britain has already decided to change its basic policies towards the Soviet Union and is now planning, instead of continuing to try to resist Soviet pressures, to endeavor to come to terms with the Soviet Union on a basis involving respective spheres of influence in various parts of the world, including Europe and the Near East, and the conclusion of a close military alliance extending perhaps beyond the framework of the United Nations. Persons following this line of reasoning might further argue that the notes have been sent in the belief that the United States will refuse to bear what the British Government, in the eyes of the British people and before the whole world, in making such a change of policy.

> After examining carefully the notes in the light of the present international situation and of the economic conditions of Great Britain, we are inclined to believe that the British Government is really convinced that it is unable any longer to expend funds, supplies and manpower in the Near East in the future as it has in the past; . . . . We feel, however, that if the United States finds itself unable to render assistance to an extent which promises successfully to resist Soviet pressures, the British Government may well find it will be compelled to approach the Soviet Government in an effort to work out some arrangement which would have the effect of at least slowing up the Russian advance in the Middle East and elsewhere. Such an arrangement would undoubtedly mean widespread concessions to Russia in one or several areas.[25]

Marshall told the Secretaries of War and navy on 26 February that he believed the British to be `definitely

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[25]Undated memorandum, *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49. The idea that Britain might enter into a close relationship with the Soviet Union was not a sudden inspiration of the State Department. The same idea was expressed in a memorandum of December 1945 (FRUS, 1946, VII, 2-3). Whether the Americans realised it or not, the British during the war had considered this possibility (*Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*, pp. 117-118; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, V, 3-8).

sincere´; he told Truman on the same day, . . . we are convinced the British Government is sincere´.[29]

Representative Walter Judd, during the hearings on the bill to implement the Truman Doctrine speech, brought up the question of British intentions:

> Judd: . . . some people claim that Britain´s economic situation is not really as serious as had been portrayed, and that this action is just another attempt to drag the United States into helping her secure her interests in the Middle East For the record, would you mind saying whether this is a trick or whether Britain´s economy is really in desperate straits?
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> Acheson: I think it is no trick at all. I think the British are entirely straightforward and sincere in what they represent.[30]

In other words, the State Department did consider British motivation, but rejected any question of sincerity out of hand. One suspects a routine standing instruction within the Department, `First test any British proposal for sincerity, then proceed.´

The announcement of the British decision was made public in Truman´s address to Congress on 12 March. He stated that the British Government, which had been helping Greece, could give no further financial or economic aid after 31 March. He followed by saying that Great Britain found itself under the necessity of reducing or liquidating its commitments in several parts of the world, including Greece, although this statement has no basis in the British

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[29]FRUS, 1947, V, 57, 58.
[30]U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Hearings on H.R. 2616, ´Assistance to Greece and Turkey*, 21 March, p. 50.

note of 21 February.[30] Most interpretations of the motives for British withdrawal before the publication of Dalton's memoir derived from this speech. There seems to have been little doubt in the minds of the American leaders that the decision was based entirely on financial necessity,[31] although another possibility was considered.

5. The Influence of the Left Wing of the Labour Party

This was a view that Bevin was forced to abandon Greece because of the opposition of the left wing of the Labour Party to British sponsorship of the royalist regime in Athens. This idea was advanced by certain senior American officials who played a part in the resulting actions.

In May 1947, Acheson asked the Embassy in London, `Are we safe in assuming that Bevin is likely to remain in the Foreign Office for the remainder of the year? Is Bevin making any progress in lining up the Labor back-benchers in support of British foreign policy? Is his thinking still [sic] influenced by their critical attitudes?' The Embassy reply indicated a firm belief that, while Bevin would be sensitive to the feelings of Labour back-benchers, there

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[30] *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Harry S. Truman, 1947*, pp. 336-340.

[31] Truman's complete acceptance of the financial motive is set forth in his *Memoirs*, II, 104-105; and Merle Miller, *Plain Speaking* (New York: Berkley, 1974), p. 258. Most of the published accounts of members of the American Government who were involved confirm this view; for example, Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 217; *Forrestal Diaries*, p. 242; Bohlen, *Witness to History*, p. 261; and Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, pp. 78-81.

would be no effect on the fundamentals of his policy towards the USSR.[33]

It has already been noted that the American Charge in London on 25 February told the State Department that there was no need to doubt British sincerity `in light of Britain´s over-extended foreign position and serious financial plight, plus political pressure within the Labour Party in the case of Greece.´[34] Averell Harriman, American Ambassador to Britain during most of 1945, said that the Attlee Government was influenced substantially with regard to Greece by the pressure from the extreme left, mentioning a `Laski-Zilliacus-Crossman group´.[35]

There were doubts within the ranks of the Labour Party concerning Churchill´s policy towards Greece even before the liberation , but these rarely came to the surface. An isolated example is Morrison´s request in Cabinet for an assurance that British troops would not be used to restore the King to the throne.[36] There were objections in December 1944 when British troops were in action against EAM in Athens. When an amendment to the King´s Speech concerning government policy in Greece was proposed, twenty-four members of the Labour Party voted against the Government and 118 either abstained or were absent. Bevin´s strong speech in the House of Commons in support of Churchill´s policies,

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[33]State Department telegram, 17 May, FRUS, 1947, I, 750-751; London telegram, 11 June, NARS 841.20/6-1147 (the text printed in FRUS, 1947, I, 751-758, is incomplete).

[34]Gallman´s telegram, FRUS, 1947, V, 68, n. 3.

[35]*Forrestal Diaries*, entries for 4 and 8 August, pp. 292-293.

[36]Eden´s minute, 5 August 1944, FO371/43715/R12086.

and his ~~speech~~ speech to the Trades Union Congress at the same time,[37] silenced much of the criticism, but opposition continued to be expressed, particularly at the Labour Party Conferences of 1945 and 1946. It intensified after the recall of the King in September 1946, and the spread of right-wing terrorism, but it amounted almost entirely to criticism of the Greek Government, and seldom of British support of Greece.[38]

The left-wing attitude to Greece was part of the more general opposition of a segment of the Labour Party to Bevin's foreign policy. The bulk of the party, including many who could never be described as left-wing, looked for the initiation of a 'Socialist foreign policy' with the departure of Churchill and Eden, although they were never able to establish what this would amount to. In practice, those who objected to Bevin's approach concentrated on distrust of the United States as the centre of capitalism; hatred of the remnants of Fascism, such as Franco Spain; and a dream of a 'third force', that is a unified movement of European Socialist parties. Gradually this opposition became identified with a loose grouping known as the 'Keep Left' movement. There was also a small ultra-left fringe which tended to be pro-Soviet. 'Keep Left' greatly annoyed Bevin in November 1946 with an amendment to the King's

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[37]406 *Parl. Deb.*, cols. 1858-1909, 8 December; *The Times*, 14 December 1944.

[38]*New Statesman*, 1944-1946, *passim*, reflects these left wing views, especially the issues of 7 and 28 September, and 28 October 1946. See also Eugene J. Meehan, *The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1960), pp. 52-65 and 71-73.

Speech signed by over a hundred Labour M.P.'s, but this was the last substantial criticism of the lack of a Socialist foreign policy.[39]

The left wing, except for die-hard extremists, was changing its view of foreign policy in the late autumn of 1946. It was losing its hope of cooperation with the Soviets, and turning to a programme of neutrality and disarmament. Disengagement was felt necessary if the social revolution was to be preserved and maintained; the financial drain caused by overseas military expenditure could well destroy the chances of an effective socialisation of Britain.[40]

There was a parallel change of attitude towards the Middle East, which, by implication, included Greece. Two articles in the *New Statesman* in December defended Bevin's foreign policies. In January, in examining Britain's Middle East position, it stated, `Two solutions are possible. On the one hand, we could state frankly to the Americans that we are unable to accept the military repsonsibility for the protection of Anglo-American interests in this part of the

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[39]In addition to Meehan, *cit. supra.*, the left-wing attitude to Bevin's foreign policy in general is disucssed by James L. Godfrey, 'British Foreign Policy and the Labour Party, 1945-1947,' *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XLVII (April 1948), pp. 137-151; Leon Epstein, 'The British Labour Left and U.S. Policy,' *American Political Science Review*, XIV-4 (December 1951), pp. 974-975; Michael R. Gordon, *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy* (Stanford University Press, 1969); Leonard Woolf, *Foreign Policy: The Labour Party's Dilemma* (London: Gollancz, 1947);and Woodrow Wyatt, *Into a Dangerous World* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson), pp. 139-149.

[40]Contemporary comment includes two articles in the *New Statesman*, 'Reorientations: I. The Munich Analogy,' 31 August 1946, and 'II. Vital Interests,' 7 September.

world.' The alternate solution, which *New Statesman* preferred, was to form an independent Arab bloc. The alternate solution seems to have been chosen mainly because of doubts that the Americans would take on new commitments in addition to those it had assumed in the Pacific. Another article argued for disengagement in the Middle East, but suggested, without much hope, that it might be possible to transfer the burden to the United States.[41] What is significant is the stress on the need to protect 'Anglo-American interests', as well as the danger of precipitate action. While *New Statesman* cannot be taken as representative of the entire left wing of the Labour Party, its attitude is evidence of the lack of wide-spread pressure in February 1947 for a withdrawal from Greece on political grounds.

Tribune, which usually reflected an attitude further to the left, took a view on Greece very close to that of *New Statesman*. While constantly criticising Bevin's general foreign policy, *Tribune* accepted the British presence in Greece. From November 1946 until the following February, there was no mention of Greece except for coverage of a trades union dispute.[42] In early February it paid tribute to the value of British troops in Greece as a brake on the

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[41]Aiden Crawley, 'The Case for Mr Bevin,' 7 December; Raymond Blackburn, 'Reply [to Crawley's article],' 14 December; 'From the Angle of Strategy,' 11 January; and 'Rumours and Realities,' 8 February.

[42]A similar lack of reporting of Greek affairs is evident in the *Daily Herald*, which, as 'Bevin's Own Paper', relected the more moderate attitudes within the Labour Party. Newsprint shortages were probably the cause, rather than any deliberate attempt to play down Greece.

Greek Government's repression of the political left. While it regretted that British influence had not been used to institute social and economic reforms along with a programme of tolerance and political justice, it issued no call for a withdrawal of aid or of troops. When there were rumours of the British decision in the first days of March 1947, *Tribune* made no effort to welcome the idea. Once the Truman Doctrine was announced, its attitude was that Bevin had handed over Greece to the United States and, in so doing, had lost `Britain's most valuable bargaining counter *vis-a-vis* American policy in general', by which was meant Britain's access to oil.[43]

Michael Foot, one of the leaders of the `Keep Left' faction, seems to deny that there was any pressure on Bevin from within the party:

> If anyone of this side of the House had got up three or four months ago and said that we ought to cut down our commitments in Greece and Turkey because they were too much for us to bear, we should have heard the phrase `degenerate intellectuals' once again. Nevertheless, it has come to pass and we have suddenly had to make this cut in our commitments.[44]

The foreign correspondent and political commentator F. A. Voigt implied that the only real public pressure to withdraw from Greece came from `Liberals', presumably members of the Liberal Party. While he coupled `left-wing labour' with the pressure for withdrawal, the thrust of his argument concerned Liberal feeling. His major piece of

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[43]'Troops without Policy,' 7 February; 'Athenian Hysteria,' 7 March; and 'The Way to the Stars--and Stripes,' 21 March.

[44]437 *Parl. Deb.*, col. 1799, 15 May 1947.

evidence was a quotation from the *Manchester Guardian* of 27 September 1946, `. . . if we [that is, Great Britain] withdraw from Greece we may be weaker strategically, but we shall be stronger morally.'[45]

A survey of the national press and political periodicals for February and early March 1947 fails to reveal any hint of pressure from the left wing of the Labour Party for withdrawal of aid to Greece.[46] Similarly, none of the autobiographies, memoirs, or biographies of leading members of the party at the time, including those of the left wing, mention any body of opinion which was pressing for withdrawal.[47] If any left wing pressure on Bevin existed, it must have been applied in secret.

6. Strategic Factors

Bevin's decision to withdraw all aid from Greece may have been the result of one or more external factors. The first of these is the question of post-war British strategy in the Middle East. While Bevin, at least after mid-1946,

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[45]Greece and English Liberals, *The Nineteenth Century and Afterwards*, February 1947, pp. 74-87.

[46]Serials examined include all London dailies, *Manchester Guardian*, *Observer*, *Sunday Times*, *Reynolds News*, *Spectator*, and *Time and Tide*, in addition to *Labour Monthly*, *New Statesman*, and *Tribune*.

[47]Autobiographies and memoirs include those of Attlee, Dalton, Morrison, Shinwell, Raymond Blackburn, Woodrow Wyatt, Douglas Jay, D. H. Pritt, Francis Williams, and George Wigg. Biographies include Williams on Attlee and Bevin, Alan Bullock on Bevin, Bernard Donoghue and G. W. Jones on Morrison, Michael Foot on Bevan; Ben Pimlott on Dalton; Simon Hoggart and David Leigh on Michael Foot; and Bruce Reed and Geoffrey Williams on Denis Healey.

had few doubts concerning the strategic importance of the Eastern Mediterranean to Britain's long term interests, he was by no means supported in this view by the Prime Minister. Attlee proposed on more than one occasion to abandon the Eastern Mediterranean as the `lifeline of Empire', and to replace it with a strategy based on the east coast of Africa. If such a decision had been taken, there would have been good reason to end the commitment to Greece, even if the economic position was not compelling.

Shortly after taking office, Attlee shocked the Chiefs of Staff by suggesting that the security of the Middle East should be left up to the United Nations.[48] In the spring of 1946, Attlee was strongly in favour of leaving Greece and Egypt and retreating to a position south of a line between Lagos and Kenya, putting, as Dalton described it, `a wide glacis of desert and Arabs between ourselves and the Russians.'[49] Bevin seems to have been of two minds about this idea. Lord Strang credited him with a view similar to that of Attlee's:

> . . . Bevin doubted whether the Canal Zone was the right place for a base and for a strategic reserve; rightly or wrongly his mind moved to the wider spaces of Indian Ocean, the east coast of Africa, that ancient meeting-place of nations; and the word "Mombasa" was often on his lips.[50]

This is echoed by Dalton, who recorded that Bevin at that time was very much in favour of the Lagos-Kenya idea, wanting to build a railway across Africa, although he was still very much interested in the Middle East. Shortly

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[48]Bryant, *Triumph in the West*, p. 383-384.

[49]*High Tide and After*, p. 105.
[50]*Home and Abroad* (London: Deutsch, 1955), p. 291.

afterward, Bevin pointed out that he did not wish to withdraw from the Middle East. The Attlee proposal was also opposed by the Chiefs of Staff. The Defence Committee of the Cabinet, after considering Attlee's paper and submissions from Bevin and the Chiefs, decided to continue to support a hundred thousand man Greek army and to retain a substantial British force in Greece indefinitely. Nothing more was heard of the Lagos-Kenya idea for some time.[51]

Note has already been taken of the discussions of Attlee, McNeil, and the Chiefs of Staff in November 1946 while Bevin was absent in New York, and McNeil's message to Bevin intimating that Greek policy was in the melting pot. McNeil felt that there was a general attitude in London of reluctance to continue any commitments at all to Greece.[52] According to an informed observer, there were considerable rumours in London to the effect that the Kenya-Lagos idea was being revived. The Middle East Command was being seen as two areas of interest separated by a desert. The Eastern Mediterranean area was felt to be valueless, but the Persian

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[51]Dalton, diary entries for 18 February and 22 March 1946. Attlee's views were presented in DO(46)27, 2 March; Bevin's in DO(46)40, 13 March, both CAB131/2. Bevin's paper was to be discussed on 15 March; the minutes of this meeting (DO(46)41) have been withheld. Defence Committe's conclusions are in FO371/58683/R5167. Attlee's proposal is discussed in some detail by William Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, pp. 107-109.

[52]*Supra*, pp. 253.

Gulf must be defended. Therefore, Suez and Cyprus should be abandoned, and, by implication, Greece.[53]

While no decision was taken in November, Attlee reopened the question with a lengthy memorandum reviewing the entire Middle East policy in early January 1947. He began with an analysis of the current Chiefs of Staff appreciation. The service chiefs believed that the United Kingdom was not defensible against long-range attack from Russia. They believed that strong forces capable of a decisive counter-attack should be maintained in the Near East to deter such an action. This would also provide protection for oil supplies and secure the Mediterranean communication route.

In Attlee's view, Britain could not support the large forces necessary for such a strategy, particularly in view of the lack of good bases other than Malta and Cyprus, and the extreme weaknesses of the Near Eastern countries such as Greece, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Egypt. Without actually saying that this policy should be abandoned, and with it support of these countries, he expressed strong doubts as to its value. His conclusion was:

> Unless we are persuaded that the U.S.S.R. is irrevocably committed to a policy of world domination and that there is no possibility of her alteration, I think that before being committed to this strategy we should seek to come to an agree-

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[53]Elizabeth Monroe, "British Interests in the Middle East," *Middle East Journal*, II-2 (April 1948), pp. 129-146. This article also suggests that there was a firm intention to abandon the Eastern Mediterranean when the attempts to solve the Palestine problem in early February 1947 failed, but this new policy was reversed with the Truman Doctrine speech. The discussion in the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 29 January (COS(47)16th, DEFE4/1), gives weight to this idea.

ment with the U.S.S.R. after consideration with Stalin of all our points of conflict.[54]

Copies of this memorandum were sent to the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff. The latter's reply has not been located, but Montgomery, by now Chief of the Imperial General Staff, recorded that he and the other Chiefs threatened to resign if Attlee did not accept their advice to maintain the British position in the Near and Middle East.[55]

The Foreign Office prepared a memorandum, which was turned into a strong letter to the Prime Minister from Bevin. This began by stating that the political arguments against Attlee's proposals seemed overwhelming. It was followed by `What you propose is a reversal of the whole policy I have been pursuing in the Middle East, with the assent of the Cabinet, since the Government took office.' Among other arguments used against Attlee, Bevin suggested that a withdrawal of strength from the area would make a gift of its manpower and resources, especially oil, to the Russians. While admitting that the countries there were weak, he felt current British plans for economic development of the area would make it prosperous, strong, and a valuable market for British goods. He went so far as to tell Attlee,

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[54]Memorandum, 5 January 1947, FO800/476.

[55]Montgomery, *Memoirs* (London: Collins, 1958), pp. 170-171. Fuller discussion is provided by R. N. Rosecrance, *Defence of the Realm*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 51-52; and C. J. Bartlett, *The Long Retreat* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 14-20. A general discussion of British policy towards the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean is contained in William Reitzel, *The United States in the Mediterranean* (New Haven: Yale Institute of International Studies, 1947), especially pp. 24-25.

`Your criticisms of the internal regimes of these countries may be valid, but you will remember that the same things were said about Abyssinia in 1935 and 1936 by those who opposed sanctions.´

Bevin felt there was no doubt that the Soviets were bent on expansion, which they would prefer to achieve by infiltration instead of armed intervention. A British withdrawal from the Middle East would result in a Soviet take-over by such means. His comments included such severe remarks as:

> I believe that it would be as idle to place reliance on gaining our own security by large-scale one-sided concession to Russia as it was with Hitler.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> A surrender of the type you suggest would only encourage the Russian leaders to believe that they could get their ends without war and would lead them into the same error Hitler made of thinking that he could get away with anything by bluff and bullying.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> It would be Munich over again, only on a world scale, with Greece, Turkey and Persia as the first victims in place of Czechoslovakia.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> If we speak to Stalin as you propose, he is as likely to respect their independence as Hitler was to respect Czechoslovakia´s and we should get as much of Stalin´s good will as we got of Hitler´s after Munich.

There were some comments on the role of the Americans:

> The effect on our relations with the United States of America would be disastrous. We are to a large extent dependent on them economically, and without their help we cannot maintain the standard of life of our people. We are hardly less dependent on them militarily. With great labour, we have at last succeeded in persuading them that their strategic interests are involved in the maintenance of our position in the Middle East. If we now withdraw at this moment, I should expect them to write us off entirely.
>
> . . . . . .

> In proportion as the Americans realise the importance to them of this area, we can expect them to bear a greater part of the burden.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> When we have consolidated our economy, when the economic revival of Europe . . . has made progress, when it has finally become clear to the Russians that they cannot drive a wedge between the Americans and ourselves, we shall be in a position to negotiate with Stalin from a position of strength. There is no hurry. Everything suggests that the Russians are now drawing in their horns and have no immediate agressive intentions. Let us wait until our strength is restored, and let us meanwhile, with American help as necessary, hold on to essential positions and concentrate on building up U.N.O.[56]

Attlee immediately discussed this paper and the comments of the Chiefs of Staff with Bevin and Alexander, with no officials present. According to Bevin's comments to Dixon, it was concluded that the existing policy as set forth in Bevin's letter should be continued; no new withdrawals of British troops from the area would be undertaken; and the policy with regard to the import of oil should be reviewed. Attlee was still not satisfied that overall defence plans required continuation of the present Middle East policy, so that further discussion would be held with the Chiefs of Staff.[57] No report of such discussions has been located, but it is evident from later Chiefs of Staff

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[56]Undated Foreign Office memorandum, and Bevin's letter to Attlee, 9 January, *loc. cit.* The statement that Britain had at last persuaded the United States to recognise mutual strategic interests in the Middle East is puzzzling, although Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary*, p. 316, believes it stems from Byrnes' acceptance in autumn 1946 of the Chiefs of Staff stress on the strategic threat, *supra*, pp. 255-257, citing Henderson's memorandum of 21 October (FRUS, 1946, VIII, 240-245). In view of the limited assistance to Britian which Byrnes' new policy promised at that time, it is difficult to understand why Bevin felt this was a worth-while pledge.

[57]Minute, 10 January, FO800/476.

papers that planning was proceeding in accordance with the policy in force prior to Attlee's intervention.[56]

Even though Attlee withdrew the proposal, his views must have made a considerable impression on Bevin, particularly since he realised that Attlee had agreed to continue the existing policy, although unconvinced of its necessity. This would have been in the back of Bevin's mind when he was confronted with Dalton's intransigence over continuation of some aid to Greece. Had Bevin been convinced that Attlee would suuport him over his version of the telegrams to Athens and Washington, he might well have taken the matter back to the Cabinet, as he had the authority (if not the requirement) to do. Certainly, the knowledge that Attlee was doubtful about a continued presence in the Middle East must have had some effect on his acceptance of Dalton's demands instead of making an appeal to higher authority.

7. The Suggestion that a Plot Was Involved

The other possible expanation for the decision to withdraw is based on the view that Bevin had `hatched a tricky plot' in order to force the Americans back into the world arena. This view has been accepted by W. N.

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[56]The basic document for that policy was set forth in DO(47)1, 1 January 1947, CAB131/4. A detailed account of the formulation of defence policy, 1945-1947, including the discussions between Attlee, Bevin and the Chiefs of Staff, is provided by Julian Lewis, *Changing Direction* (London: Sherwood, 1988), chapter 6. See also Raymond Smith, 'A Climate of Opinion: British Officials and the Development of British Soviet Policy, 1945-1947,' *International Affairs*, LXIV-4 (Autumn 1988), pp. 631-647.

Medlicott, one of the most distinguished British historians of the period, as well as by several other authorities.[58]

The circumstantial evidence for such a plot is extensive and provides an arguable basis for its acceptance. There can be little doubt that Britain, since the end of the war felt herself to be almost alone in opposition to the Soviet Union. The Americans had been giving every appearance of retreating into their traditional isolationism, especially in the light of their long-standing commitment to the withdrawal of occupation forces from Europe by mid-1947. Their European policy did seem to be changing during the autumn of 1946 with the efforts to establish West Germany, and a somewhat stronger attitude towards the Soviet Union,

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[58]Medlicott, *British Foreign Policy since Versailles* (London: Methuen, 1968), p. 280, and *Contemporary England* (London: Longman, 1967), p. 494; Barker, *Britain in a Divided World*, p. 68; Denis Healey, "Power Politics and the Labour Party," in *New Fabian Essays*, ed. R. H. S. Crossman (London: Turnstile Press, 1952) and as quoted in *Day Before Yesterday*, ed. Alan Thompson (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1971), p. 47 (when asked by the author in 1979 whether he had had any indication of this view from Bevin, Healey replied that he could no longer recall the basis of his earlier statements); Roy Jenkins, *British Foreign Policy since 1945*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 5 (admittedly, by inference); R. Ben Jones, *The Making of Contemporary Europe* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1980), pp. 24-25; Roy E. Jones, "Reflections upon an Eventful Period in Britain's Foreign Relations," *International Relations*, II-8 (October 1961), pp. 529-532; and Richard Tames, *Ernest Bevin* (Aylesbury: Shire, 1974), p. 36. Authorities who consider this view a possibility, or who provide useful discussion of it, include: Herbert L. Feis, *From Trust to Terror* (London: Blond, 1970), pp. 187-188; Joseph Frankel, *British Foreign Policy since 1945*, pp. 106-107, 186-187; Robert G. Kaiser, *Cold Winter, Cold War* (New York: Stein and Day, 1974), pp. 175-190; Dexter Perkins, *The Diplomacy of a New Age* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1967), p. 37; and David Watt, "Withdrawal from Greece," in *Age of Austerity*, ed. Philip Sissons and Michael French (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1963), pp. 109-118.

but there was no indication of action. The initiatives in Germany might only be attempts to end its involvement in Europe; the new general attitude was still limited to diplomatic pressures and speeches. In this situation, it would be understandable that Bevin should attempt to galvanise the United States into action.

The importance of full American support in world affairs, coupled with Bevin's reputation for a special sense of timing, constitutes grounds for a belief that the decision to withdraw all aid from Greece on short notice was a deliberate action designed to force a change in U.S. foreign policy. This view would be strengthened if it could be shown that Britain's financial difficulties were not thought to be as serious as they really were, and that therefore the need to cease all aid to Greece was not pressing.

The strongest argument for the hypothesis is the fact that it is based on the accounts of Francis Williams, Attlee's press secretary and a close friend and political associate of Bevin. These accounts, when published, were not contradicted by senior government officials who had been involved in the decision, or questioned by political observers. Williams set forth his views in two books, the biography *Ernest Bevin* published in 1952,[60] and the semi-autobiography of Attlee, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, 1961.[61] *Ernest Bevin* is, strictly speaking, a secondary source, although Williams points out that much of its content is derived from his personal friendship with Bevin. *A Prime*

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[60]London: Hutchinson, 1952.
[61]London: Heinemann, 1961.

Minister Remembers is more difficult to classify. It is based on interviews with Attlee, reported in such a way that it is often difficult to determine whether one is reading Attlee's statements or Williams' opinions. Attlee's authobiography, *As it Happened*, contains no mention of the British decision to withdraw from Greece.[62]

According to Williams, Bevin saw that the best, indeed perhaps the only, hope for European security vis-a-vis the Soviet Union lay in an American realisation and acceptance of her international responsibilities. Britain was holding the line in far too many places and the Americans in far too few. Bevin had to play for time--and to be very careful not to frighten America into a new isolationism by precipitate action.[63]

> It was to this purpose that [Bevin] now bent his major energies, knowing that time was short and his own resources running out . . . . His job as he conceived it was to hold on with grim patience for the right moment and the right issue.
>
> He judged that this moment and this issue had arrived in Greece in February 1947 . . . . Now Bevin shrewdly assessing in his mind the current of American opinion and the cumulative effect upon it of Russian policy decided that the time had come to force the American administration to a major policy decision.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> It was a declaration *deliberately* designed to bring America fully into the defence of Europe. If in making it Bevin employed the tactics of shock he did so because he saw that only thus was it possible to compel a decision on which the fate of Europe and perhaps the world depended.
>
> Judging by its developing consequences Bevin's carefully timed act must thus be seen as one of the

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[62]London: Heinemann, 1954.

[63]*Ernest Bevin*, p. 263; *A Prime Minister Remembers*, pp. 162, 169-170, 172.

> most decisive strokes in the history of diplomacy . . . . He had achieved his first purpose.[64]

If this explanation of the motives behind the British announcement is accepted, the implication is far reaching. It expresses a belief that the United States was forced to re-enter the world arena by a deliberate, well-planned action of the British Government. If it could be proven that the British leaders did not feel their financial position to be particularly desperate at this point, the element of duplicity would be even more definite. The long-range implications are even more significant. The American administration was only able respond to the British decision by preaching a long-term crusade against Communism; by adopting the programme known as Containment; in effect, by initiating the Cold War.

This may be an overstatement. It is doubtful that Bevin saw the eventual outcome in these terms. Technically, he only asked that the United States take over British financial responsibilities in Greece and Turkey; was it his fault that the Americans response amounted to an anti-Soviet crusade? If the real purpose was to force the United States to take an active role in opposition to the Soviet Union, the British had a responsibility to consider the full implications. Surely, they would have remembered the crusading attitudes of the United States in both World Wars, and the complications caused to British diplomacy by Wilson's Fourteen Points and Roosevelt's Atlantic Charter. Orme Sargent specifically warned Bevin in mid-1946 of the

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[64]*Ernest Bevin*, pp. 263-264. Italics added.

'mercurial atttiudes' of the United States in foreign affairs which he felt might well precipitate crisis.[65]

If Bevin intended, not just to hand over the Greek and Turkish problems, but to 'call in the New World in a much more genuine sense than Canning had done in 1823'[66] to redress the balance of the old, they must have known what to expect in terms of ideological rigidity.[67] If they were forced to bring the United States in because of financial exhaustion, then any undesirable American reaction would have to be accepted as less dangerous than a Soviet take-over in the Eastern Mediterranean. On the other hand, if Williams' account is acecepted, Bevin was not forced to withdraw, but chose to do so for the definite purpose of bringing the United States into action. It follows that it might not be too far-fetched to consider that the British started the Cold War.[68]

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[65]Minute, 6 September, FO371/51609/AN2653.

[66]The phrase is that of Coral Bell, *The Debatable Alliance* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 9.

[67]Immediately after the Truman Doctrine speech, the British Ambassador in Washington commented to the Foreign Office, 'The missionary strain in the character of Americans also leads many of them to feel that they have now received a call to extend to other countries the blessings with which the Almighty has endowed their own (FO371/67035/3482).

[68]Frankel, *British Foreign Policy*, pp. 106-107, suggests that Britain started the Cold War, although he does not connect this idea directly with the withdrawal of aid from Greece. Elsewhere in this work, (p. 187), he qualifies this view as a possible interpretation. The only definite accusation to the effect that the British Government started the Cold War appears to be that of J. R. Campbell in 'Crafty Clem's Legacy to Labour,' a review of Williams' *A Prime Minister Remembers* (*Daily Worker*, 13 April 1961). Campbell wrote, '. . . it is clear that Attlee is entitled to stand alongside Churchill as one of the originators of the Cold War.'

8. Premises for a Plot

The idea that the British were motivated by a desire to force the American hand requires the acceptance of several premises. These include the view that Britain, since the summer of 1945, had been almost alone in opposition to the Soviet Union; that the United States had withdrawn from international affairs except in carrying out its occupation responsibilities and its participation in the United Nations; that Britain was not, or did not believe itself to be, financially exhausted in February 1947; and that Bevin made a definite attempt to force the United States to become Britain's partner-in-opposition to the Soviet Union.

The first of these premises is that which assumes that Britain felt itself to be alone in holding the line against the Soviet Union in the first two post-war years. According to Williams, Attlee and Bevin saw Britain as almost the sole target of Soviet attack.[69] C. M. Woodhouse, in his analysis of British foreign relations since the war, puts it even stronger in saying, `the brunt of the growing tension between the Western powers and the Soviet Government had been borne by the British', at least well into 1946.[70] The American Embassy in Moscow noted that Britain was the principle target of Soviet propaganda attacks until mid-1946, when the United States replaced it.[71]

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[69]*A Prime Minister Remembers*, p. 161.

[70]*British Foreign Policy since the Second World War* (London: Hutchinson, 1961), p. 16.

[71]Telegram, 23 July, FRUS, 1946, VI, 768-771.

These views are based on the fact that the Soviets in the United Nations seldom criticised the Americans, but bitterly complained of the use of British troops in Greece, Syria, Iran, and Indonesia; and on the feeling that most Soviet diplomatic moves at the time were directed against areas of special British interest such as Libya, the Turkish Straits, and the Dodecanese Islands. Britain was taking a more active role in opposition than the United States. Attlee was the first to criticise the Soviet use of the veto in the Security Council; Bevin was alleged to have been alone in resisting the Soviet demands for revision of the Montreux Convention; Bevin took the lead at the Foreign Ministers Conference in the summer of 1946 concerning the Danube Commission, the Italo-Yugoslav frontier, and the negotiations for an Austrian Peace Treaty. Bevin, some months after the Truman Doctrine speech, let it be known to the British Embassy in Washington that he `feels no one--and certainly no U.S. statesman--has shown as firm and consistent resistance to Communism as he has, himself'.[72]

The British may well have felt themselves alone in protecting the West from the Soviet Union during the war years. Roosevelt's insistence on no war-time agreements on post-victory settlements and his personal diplomacy frequently prevented or negated long-range planning for peace. These factors made it necesary for the British to act independently or to allow important problems to remain unresolved. Pertinent incidents include the failure of the Americans to adopt any real policy concerning a German settlement, the

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[72]Minute, 19 August 1947, FO371/61003/AN2922.

fate of Austria, or the governments of Eastern Europe, at least until early 1945. There was also the American attitude which regarded Eastern and Central Europe as basically British responsibilities. The war-time relationship may well have conditioned British officials, particularly the Foreign Office, to believe that Britain was continuing to bear the anti-Soviet burden alone in 1945 and 1946.[73]

The Soviet Union did seem to have been directing more of its moves against the British than against the Americans, perhaps in some attempt to play on British weakness or because Britain's interests in the Near and Middle East clashed to a greater extent with those of the Soviet Union. Byrnes appeared to be making a greater attempt to conciliate the Soviets in late 1945, especially with regard to the Eastern European peace treaties. The real factors were more likely the often-expressed American determination to withdraw its troops from the occupation of Germany as soon as possible (a policy not reversed until Byrnes' Stuttgart speech of September 1946), and the general impression that the Americans had once more retreated into isolation,[74]

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[73]An American view that the British were carrying the greater diplomatic burden in protecting the West during and immediately after the war is provided by Philip E. Mosely, a senior State Department negotiator on the European Advisory Commission and other multi-partite bodies during this period ('Hopes and Failures,' in *The Fate of East Central Europe*, ed. Stephen D. Kertesz (Notre Dame University Press, 1956) pp. 54-66).

[74]Indications that the belief that the United States had returned to isolation was accepted in the British Labour Party at the time include Dalton, *High Tide and After*, p. 101; Denis Healey, 'Power Politics and the Labour Party,' p. 176; and Roy Jenkins, *British Foreign Policy since 1945*, p. 5.

which may have given the Soviets reason to believe that they had little to fear from the United States.

Even after the announcement of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, there was some feeling that isolationism was still a dominant feature of American political thought. Sir John Balfour, Minister in the Washington Embassy, wrote to the Foreign Office in August 1947 that, if Britain did not cooperate more closely with the United States in retaining troops in Greece, there might be another American retreat.[75]

There are reasons for accepting the belief that the United States retreated into isolation after mid-1945. The American military forces were demobilised in an unseemly hurry. The Congrss showed itself most unwilling to provide any more money for foreign aid than was absolutely necessary. The American people felt themselves secure with the establishment of the United Nations, and with the sole possession of the atomic bomb. They were mainly concerned with the avoidance of a return to the Depression; with progress towards the satisfaction of the post-war demand for consumer goods; and with a desire to enjoy the good life they had been told they had been fighting for.

Even so, the United States was playing a significant role in international relations in the years 1945 and 1946. It was participating in the occupation of Germany and Austria; conducting the occupation of Japan almost single-handedly; taking a good part in the attempts to arrive at

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[75]FO371/61003/AN2922.

peace treaties for all of Europe; and supporting the British quite consistently. Its deficiencies, at least from the British point of view, were its unwillingness to provide massive financial aid abroad; its desire to continue to reduce its overseas military strength; and its still rather anti-colonialist attitude towards the British.

Whatever the exact truth is about Britain facing the Soviet Union alone, or about an American retreat into isolation, there seems a sufficient basis to justify British leaders in those days feeling themselves lacking support in the face of major difficulties. Britain was faced with a long list of involvements; Germany, Austria, Trieste, Greece, Palestine, Egypt, Iran, India, Burma. Taking into account her financial weakness and manpower shortages in the face of external problems and the requirements of Labour´s massive developments (nationalisation, the social welfare system and the National Health Service) at home, there was reason for her leaders to feel that Britain, after all the sacrifices and losses of the war, had been abandoned by the United States.

The idea of a deliberate scheme to force the Americans back into Europe would be strengthened considerably if it could be proven that British leaders thought that the country was not in financial trouble in late 1946-early 1947. In hindsight, this idea is difficult to accept, in view of the fuel crisis of February 1947, the convertibility crisis six months later, and the general deterioration of the economy until the implementation of the Marshall Plan. One authority does try to prove the opposite view, by showing that exports for the last quarter of 1946 ´were

running at 111 percent of their pre-war level, while imports were being held at 72.2 percent by the same standard.[76]

These figures are misleading. They reflect a comparison with 1938, a year in which British external trade was relatively poor compared to the general run of the late thirties. The figures for level of imports in 1946 is artifical, in that many foreign products for which there was a demand were still not available, and economic controls prevented the free importation of goods. ~~Not~~ Not taken into account is invisible income nor military expenditure abroad. Invisible income had declined in this period by 166 million pounds; overseas military expenditure had increased from 13 millions in 1938 to 300 millions in 1946. The best figures available to the British Government in February 1947 indicated an overall balance of payments deficit for 1946 of 450 million pounds.[77]

The problem was compounded by the fact that Britain's exports in 1946 went mainly to the sterling area (or other non-dollar areas), while her imports had to come almost exclusively from hard currency areas, chiefly the United States and Canada. Britain needed to import foodstuffs,

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[76]Roy E. Jones, 'Reflections on an Eventful Period in Britain's Foreign Relations,' p. 529.

[77]This is the figure given in *Command 7046, Economic Survey for 1947*, not issued until 21 February, but debated in mid-January (Dalton, *High Tide and After*, pp. 193-198). In April, the estimate was reduced to 400 million pounds (*Command 7099*). Even this was apparently far too high, the figure of 298 millions being given by *Command 9981* of 1956.

machinery, and raw materials which could be purchased only with dollars. It was her shortage of dollars, not her overall balance of payments position, which was critical. In considering the relationship of financial difficulty to the question of stopping aid to Greece, it should be remembered that almost all the costs of aid to the Greek Armed Forces could be met with sterling.[78]

There is evidence that British leaders in early 1947 were optimistic about the financial position. Douglas Jay, in an official Labour Party pamphlet, said, "Owing to the great success of the export drive, the American and Canadian Loans have not been used nearly as quickly as expected. The loans should last until spring 1949."[79] Dalton confirms that there was such optimisim, even pointing out that *The Financial Times* as late as 10 May 1947 had written that some of Dalton's own Treasury officials were complacent about the position.[80]

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[78]More detailed analyses of the actual British financial position in early 1947 are provided by Richard Clarke, *Anglo-American Economic Collaboration in War and Peace* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), pp. 72-80; Richard N. Gardner, *Sterling-Dollar Diplomacy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), pp. 306-312; and J. C. R. Dow, *The Management of the British Economy, 1945-1960* (Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 13-29.

[79]"Labour's Plan for 1947," *Labour Party Discussion Series*, No. 13, March 1947, p. 5. Raymond Blackburn, *I Am an Alcoholic* (London: Wingate, 1959), p. 72, in discussing Jay's attitude in March 1947 to the coming crisis, does suggest that Jay had private doubts as to the real position. Jay, in his 1980 autobiography, *Change and Fortune* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), states that in writing this pamphlet he was quoting Sir Otto Clarke of the Treasury Overseas Finance Department, who in turn was relying on information from the Bank of England. Jay points out that Dalton was receiving the same advice from the Bank. Clarke himself quotes a Treasury estimate of October 1946 that the loan <u>might</u> last until spring 1949 (*Anglo-American Economic Collaboration*, p. 73).

[80]*High Tide and After*, p. 258.

Even so, Dalton must take some of the blame for any false optimism in higher circles. In a speech of 16 October to the `Bankers and Merchants of the City of London´, he announced that the current export drive had succeeded `beyond expectation´, and that the deficit on the overseas trading account would be less than anticipated.[81] As late as 2 February 1947, Dalton still sounded very optimistic. To quote *The Times*, `Stating that there would be no financial crisis, Mr Dalton . . . said that present financial controls were quite strong enough to prevent such an event.´ Dalton himself goes to great pains to claim that he at no time shared this optimism, and records that he continually warned Attlee and the Cabinet of the true positon, beginning in February 1946.[82]

The Foreign Office had a realistic picture of the situation. In a circular for all overseas posts drafted in January 1947, the problems were presented with emphasis on how the external financial postion would affect British foreign policy. It was evident that foreign aid would have to be reduced. Specifically, there was little prospect for more than modest contributions to Greece and Austria, `and even there our contributions are designed as much to elicit

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[81] *Ibid.*, p. 163. The entire speech implies general optimism concerning the financial position, but Dalton elsewhere (p.220) states that in the same month he circulated a ´strident´ warning on the hard currency situation. Dalton was correct in saying that the deficit would be less than expected, since his estimate in February 1946 was a a £770 million 1946 short-fall (´Balance of Payments 1946,´ 8 February 1946, CP(46)53, CAB129/7).

[82] *High Tide and After*, pp. 220.

a larger contribution from the United States as for their practical effect by themselves.'[83]

The State Department suspected that the British were deliberately exaggerating the seriousness of the foreign exchange problem in order to obtain concessions on the implementation of the 1946 Loan Agreement.[84] Bernard Baruch, self-appointed advisor to American Presidents and Secretaries of State, recounted the same suspicion to President Truman in January 1947.[85]

Perhaps the truth was that the British leaders did not really know what the financial position was. Herbert Morrison, commenting on Dalton as Chancellor, said:

> . . . there was evidence that he was unaware of the financial crisis of 1947 until he was in the midst of it. This I put down to the fact that he had not ensured that periodical reports on both the financial and economic situations were put before him, especially as to the dollar situation.[86]

Even if there are grounds for accepting a certain degree of unwarranted optimism concerning the financial position in early 1947, there is no evidence that Bevin was infected. Further, any optimism existing at the turn of the year must have been considerably dampened by the Economic Survey for 1947, and by the fuel crisis of early February. Certainly, financial circles were well aware of the situation.[87]

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[83]FO371/62420/UE176.

[84]Telegram, 18 January, FRUS, 1947, III, 1-3.

[85]Arthur Krock, *Memoirs* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1968), p. 267.

[86]*Herbert Morrison*, (London: Oldhams, 1960), p. 261.

[87]For example, *The Economist*, 21 and 28 February 1947, printed in *The Financial Times*, due to fuel-crisis restrictions on periodicals.

9. Evidence for a Plot

The difficulty is that there is no documentary evidence for the idea of a deliberate plot, except for Williams' statements. It rests on the circumstantial evidence, along with some complacency concerning the British economic situation in February 1947; the fact that there were some elements of surprise in the note to the Americans, and the incontrovertible fact that the note resulted in the Truman Doctrine speech. There is also the curious incident of the reaction to Williams' publication of his views in *Ernest Bevin*. Reviewers failed to comment on the revelation of a deliberate plot; either this idea was completely acceptable or its significance escaped them. These included Hector McNeil and Christopher Mayhew, as well as Hugh Trevor-Roper, Leonard Woolf, Richard Crossman, and Denis Healey. Amongst the journals which took no note of this aspect of Williams' book were *International Affairs*, *Foreign Affairs*, and the *Times Literary Supplement*. Only the (London) *Daily Worker* called attention to Williams' view and accepted it.[66]

It is true that there were elements of shock in the British note of 21 February, but the surprise was not that

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[66]McNeil, *Daily Herald, 6 November 1952*; Mayhew, *Spectator*, 7 November; Woolf, *Political Quarterly*, XXIV (1953), 116-117; Crossman, *New Statesman*, 8 November 1952; Healey, *Forward*, 22 November; *Daily Worker*, 6 November. A cutting of Trevor-Roper's review has been found, but there is no indication of the periodical in which it was printed; its author has been unable to identify it. The *Sunday Times* (9 November) and identical reviews of 6 November in the *Oxford Mail* and the *Birmingham Gazette* all noted Williams' contention, but either doubted its validity or failed to accept it. Fifty-six reviews were examined.

the British wanted help in Greece; it was the extremely short notice and the fact that the British were withdrawing all aid.[88] Williams in 1952 seems to have believed that this shock was part of Bevin's deliberate plan;[89] but the sequence of events from September 1946 to February 1947 as recorded in the official files explains the eventual short notice as the result of long drawn-out interdepartmental negotiations.

Williams' view can be accepted if it is believed that it is the product of information given him privately by

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[88]Indications of what the shock amounted to are contained in Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 217, 220-1; Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, p. 8; and Margaret Truman, *Harry S. Truman*, p. 376. Williams' story of Marshall being so shocked that he sent an angry cable to Bevin asking if there had been a major change in British foreign policy (*Ernest Bevin*, p. 263) seems based on faulty memory; the telegram he describes is almost certainly that of 1 August 1947 (FRUS, 1947, V, 273-274) concerning the withdrawal of British troops from Greece. No telegram from Marshall to Bevin in the month after delivery of the note of 21 February which would fit Williams' description has been found in British or American records, although Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary*, p. 370, confirms Williams' claim without providing a source. Marshall did send another telegram on 1 August to the American Ambassador in London, pointing out that the United States had been acutely embarrassed in February by the short notice given then, and that Bevin must be warned that the American Government 'cannot possibly expect to obtain support either in public opinion or in Congress for actions necessitated by sudden decisions presented to us by the British' (*ibid.*, p. 275). Inverchapel made a tactful suggestion to the Foreign Office that, while the shock effect of the note had probably been useful on this occasion, it might not be advisable to try such tactics again (FO371/67035/R3482).

[89]In spite of the fact that he told American newsmen shortly after the Truman Doctrine speech that the United States had no reason to be shocked because the State Department had known for some months that Britain intended to abandon Greece in March 1947 (*San Francisco Chroncicle*, 10 April 1947; FO371/67039/R4886 and 67040/R5084).

Bevin.[91] Perhaps Bevin, aware in later years of the results of the British withdrawal of aid from Greece, gave Williams the impression that he had planned it as a stimulus to the Americans. It is easier to credit it to an almost pardonable burst of enthusiasm on Williams' part. In 1952, when *Ernest Bevin* was written, the Cold War was in one of its greatest periods of tension, that of the Korean War. The great heroes of the day were those who were doing most to fight Communism, but the leadership and whatever glory was attached was American, not British.

Bevin's action in 1947 had, to a significant extent, been responsible for the Truman Doctrine and the policy of contain-ment. It may not have seemed to be stretching the point too far to see the withdrawal decision not as a necessity dictated by financial difficulties or as the culmination of an orderly policy-making decision, but as an inspired stroke of statesmanship. Doubts as to the validity of Williams' statements in 1952 or 1953, so soon after Bevin's death, would have seemed unworthy; and little contradictory evidence (such as Dalton's memoirs) was then available.

There are some indications that Williams was not as convinced of this story in later years. In a set of notes prepared for a series of interviews with Attlee in 1959, Williams includes: `Was the British action in facing the

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[91]Williams states in the author's notes to *Ernest Bevin* that the book is based 'upon many long conversations I had with him from 1929 to within a few days of his death and of which I kept notes'. Many papers concerned with the preparation of *Ernest Bevin* and Williams' other books are preserved in the Francis-Williams papers in Churchill College, Cambridge, but there are no notes of conversations with Bevin.

U.S. with a fait accompli in the decision to withdraw from Greece designed to this end [to create a major change in American foreign policy]?[92] Williams' doubts on the point seem reflected in the book which resulted from the interviews, wherein Attlee is quoted as saying that the major turning point in American policy came with the Berlin Airlift of 1948. Greece is treated as a matter of limited importance.[93] In a book published after the appearance of Dalton's memoirs, in which Attlee, Bevin, and British foreign policy are discussed in great detail, Williams makes no suggestion that Bevin and Attlee were responsible for the Truman Doctrine; a hurried reader might get the impression that Churchill was the moving force.[94]

10. Timing

After the event, Bevin was given much credit for his sense of timing in this matter, both by Williams and his followers, and by others as diverse as Lord Strang and Michael Foot.[95] It could hardly be a good time to deliver the note four days before a virulent public attack on President Truman by Bevin concerning Palestine.[96] It was

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[92]Francis-Williams papers, Box 24.
[93]*A Prime Minister Remembers*, p. 172.
[94]*Nothing So Strange* (London: Cassell, 1970), p. 246.
[95]Strang, *Home and Abroad*, p. 291; Foot, *Aneurin Bevan* (London, Davis-Poynter, 1973), II, 89. Others who praise Bevin's timing at this point included Barker, *Divided Europe*, p. 69; David Dilks, *Retreat from Power* (London: Macmillan, 1981), II, 20; Frankel, *Foreign Policy*, p. 187; and David Watt, 'Withdrawal from Greece.' pp. 176-178.

[96]433 *Parl. Deb.*, col. 1909, 25 February. Truman (*Memoirs*, II, 108, 164) and Acheson (*Present at the Creation*, p. 181) comment on the effect of this speech on American decision makers.

only a few weeks before the Moscow conference of foreign ministers, at which it was hoped to achieve a settlement for Germany. A strong American response with regard to Greece might ruin negotiations.[97] It has been suggested that Bevin saw the appointment of Marshall as Secretary of State as a signal of a more receptive American mood, but the official files indicate British uncertainty as to Marshall's probable attitudes.[98] It is true that the American attitude towards the Soviet Union was gradually hardening throughout 1946,[99] and that Byrnes had announced a 'new policy' towards Greece in October. Neither of these seem sufficiently definite to justify a British belief that late February 1947 was a particularly good time to deliver the bombshell.

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[97]Strong views that the Truman Doctrine speech had an adverse effect on the Moscow Conference are contained in Arnold Toynbee, Introduction to *Survey of International Affairs, 1947-1948*, ed. Peter Calvocoressi (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 6-7; Gladwyn Jebb, *Memoirs* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970), p. 199; and J. Wheeler-Bennett and A. Nicholls, *Semblance of Peace* (New York: Norton, 1974), p. 471. On the other hand, none of the particiapnts in the conference who have left memoirs (Bohlen, *Witness to History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1975); Mark W. Clark, *From the Danube to the Yalu* (London: Harrap, 1954); Lucius Dub. Clay, *Decision in Germany* (London: Heinemann, 1950); John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace* (London: Harrap, 1950); Maurice Peterson, *Both Sides of the Curtain* (London: Constable, 1950); Walter Bedell Smith, *Moscow Mission* (London: Heinemann, 1950)) indicate any such effect, except for Robert Murphy (*Diplomat among Warriors* (New York: Pyramid, 1965), pp. 341-343), which is limited to a slight implication. On balance, it would seem that the Truman Doctrine speech had little effect, but Bevin could not have been certain of this in February.

[98]Bevin's letter to Attlee and resulting papers, PREM8 705.

[99]The more significant reports of the British Embassy in Washington on the changing American attitudes are in FO371/51609-51611; they are analysed in depth by Peter Boyle, 'The Foreign Office View of Soviet-American Relations,' *Diplomatic History*, III-3 (Summer, 1979), pp. 307-320.

If the need to bring the United States back into international affairs forced Bevin to this decision, was the need so pressing in February 1947 that it required immediate action? The future attitude of the United States towards international affairs was uncertain, particularly in light of Truman's loss of majority support in Congress in the November ~~Novembr~~ 1946 elections. Control of government expenditure was now in the hands of the Republicans under the arch-isolationist Robert Taft. The policies of the new Secretary of State were still unknown; the forthcoming meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers might well demonstrate whether the somewhat stronger American foreign policy was to continue, or to be abandoned. Why not wait and see?

It is far more convincing to consider that Bevin had not made up his mind about a full scale approach to the Americans until late January 1947, or, alternately, that Bevin was gradually forced into it by the worsening situation in Greece and the resulting recommendations of the Chiefs of Staff.

There <u>are</u> other reasons suggested for the timing of the withdrawal. The Greek civil war was intensifying by January 1947. The royalist government could not be expected to continue for long unless significantly greater amounts of foreign aid were supplied. The Greek Government had been asking for some time for sufficient additional funds and arms to raise the army strength by 30,000 men, and the current arrangement for British support of the original number expired on 31 March. Extension of the same existing level of support would not be sufficient because of the increased guerrilla activity. This may be clear in hind-sight but it does not seem to have been a factor in British

policy making. As pointed out earlier, the Chiefs of Staff believed the bandits could be put down in one short sharp campaign, and that only a small amount of additional money would be needed.

A more important factor in January 1947 was the great fuel crisis. The unusually severe winter weather was intensified by the blizzard which began on 25 January and continued almost without interruption until 10 March. By 7 February, electricity to industry was cut off, and major restrictions imposed on domestic users. Unemployment rose from a rate of two and a half percent to fifteen percent on 22 February. This alone was a great blow to the export drive on which so much depended, and in particular on efforts to conserve what remained of the American loan, in view of the summer deadline for sterling convertibility. There was even the possibility that it would be necessary to import coal, which would mean further dollar expenditure.[100]

In the two weeks ending 22 February, when the decision to withdraw was made, the outlook was bleak indeed. Dalton recorded on 10 February:

> . . . we are landed in a political, as well as a fuel crisis. The weekend Press has been full of panic fanned by stupid speeches by Shinbad talking of `complete disaster' and by Shawcross, who always gets his words wrong, prophesying unless we take great care,

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[100]Alex J. Robertson, *The Bleak Midwinter* (Manchester University Press, 1987), analyses in detail the extent and effect of the fuel crisis on economic development.

> `the fall of the Labour Government and the end of Socialism in our time´.[101]

This is echoed by a historian of the Labour Government who said, `That weekend [8-9 February] the Labour Government was closer to collapse than it ever had been, or was to be during the whole of its first period in office.´[102] There was even talk of the need to form a coalition government, which Attlee had to put down with a speech on 15 February.[103]

Even Americans were disturbed, not about the imminent fall of the Labour Government, but concerning the suffering in Britain. Queues of Americans offering aid formed outside British consulates in the United States, to an extent not seen since Dunkirk.[104] A quality American newspaper displayed an eight-column headline across its front page,

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[101]Dalton, *Diaries*. ´Shinbad´ was Dalton´s nickname for Shinwell. Shinwell actually said (*The Times*, 10 February), ´If domestic and industrial consumers declined to cooperate in this emergency, we should find ourselves in the next ten days in a condition of complete disaster.´ Shawcross, the Attorney-General, was reported as saying in a public speech (*loc. cit.*), ´. . . if we did not overcome the fuel situation and improve coal production the Labour Government would fail, and that would be the end of Socialism in our time.´

[102]Ernest Watkins, *The Cautious Revolution* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1951), p. 22. Descriptions of the panic amongst members of the Parliamentary Labour Party include: Shinwell, *I´ve Lived through It All* (London: Gollancz, 1973), pp. 194-195; Lord Wigg, *George Wigg* (London: Michael Joseph, 1972), pp. 128-133; and Raymond Blackburn, *I Am an Alcoholic*, pp. 66-68. Other accounts are in Medlicott, *Contemporary England*, pp. 481-483; and ´Mr Micawber´s Crisis,´ *The Economist*, 15 February 1947.

[103]*Manchester Guardian*, 17 February.

[104]John Morton, ´American Reactions to Britain´s Crisis,; *New Statesman*, 8 March; other comment in ´British Austerity and American Aid,´ *Round Table*, CXLVII (June 1947), pp. 258-259.

`British Rioters Storm Coal Yards in Crisis'.[105] Truman offered to divert coal-carrying ships already at sea to British ports, an offer Attlee turned down on grounds that the diversion would increase suffering elsewhere.[106] *LIFE* magazine headed an article, `The British Crisis: We Cannot Watch with Indifference while Our Closest Ally Goes Down' and suggested that the United States should use American soldiers to replace some of the British troops in Germany.[107] It might be argued that this American reaction was the signal for Bevin to initiate a deliberate plan, but few indications of the American sympathy were available in Britain by 18 February.

This period of crisis saw a number of British decisions involving the abandonment of long-cherished commitments. On 14 February the Cabinet decided to refer the Palestine problem to the United Nations, in effect announcing the end of British responsibility there. On 20 February Attlee announced that the British would withdraw from Burma and India not later than June 1948. These two decisions, taken together with those concerning Greece and Turkey on 18 February, have been considered as evidence that the British Government panicked and gave up a large share of its

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[105] *Washington Post*, 9 February. The supporting story hardly lived up to the headline; it related that there were several cases of crowds being moved on by police from the premises of coal merchants who were unable to sell coal reserved for hospitals.

[106] State Department telegram, 13 February, FRUS, 1947, III, 492-493; and *Department of State Bulletin*, 23 February.

[107] 24 February 1947.

overseas commitments because of the fuel crisis and the overall financial situation.[108]

Logical as it may seem, these three decisions are linked only by coincidence. The announcements of the ending of British commitments in South Asia and in Palestine were both the result of long-term discussions and negotiations which finally came to a conclusion at this time. The fuel crisis played no part in either case, nor was immediate financial difficulty a factor of significance. The Soviet threat was not involved.[109] As Bevin pointed out, "All the world is in trouble at once; the troubles do not come one at a time."[110] What ever the motivation was for the withdrawal of aid from Greece, it was not part of a sudden decision to abandon the Empire.

11. The Decision to Withdraw All Financial Aid

The discussion of further financial aid for the Greeks proceeded slowly but definitely from early autumn 1946 until January 1947. The only decision which might be ascribed to

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[108]Contemporary analysis along this line includes "The New Monroe," *The Economist*, 22 March 1947; and Willson Woodside, "Alarm in Washington," *Spectator*, 21 March 1947. The State Department saw a connection between the notes on Greece and Turkey and the simultaneous withdrawal from Burma, India, and Palestine (Henderson's remarks, 24 February, FRUS, 1947, V, pp. 45-47). The effect of the fuel crisis on British policy in general is the theme of Robert G. Kaiser, *Cold Winter, Cold War*.

[109]For Palestine, see William Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East 1945-1951* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), chapter IV-4; and Ritchie Ovendale, "The Palestine Problem of the British Government, 1947: The Decision to Withdraw," *International Affairs*, LVI-1 (January 1980), pp. 73-93. For India, Nicholas Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power, 1942-1947*, Vol. IX (Mer Majesty's Stationary Office, 1980.

[110]433 *Parl. Deb.*, col. 2304.

panic was the acceptance of Dalton's redraft of the tele-
grams to ~~elimnate~~ eliminate any further British participation in the support of Greece. Until then, Bevin and the Foreign Office assumed that Britain would continue to play an important role in Greece. Dalton's motive in demanding complete withdrawal of aid is obscure; he seems more determined to punish the Greeks than to save money. Something changed Bevin's mind between 15 and 18 February; this may have been a realisation that Greece was simply not worth further argument with Dalton, or a some sudden insight as to the possible effects of a complete abandonment.

It is possible that Bevin, in reviewing the problem of Greece just before or while speaking to Dalton, began to see that a major advantage might result in terms of anti-Soviet support if the Americans accepted the challenge. It is hardly likely that Bevin could have imagined (as Williams implies) that the United States, if it took over the burden of Greece, would accompany this action with a return to full participation in international affairs. It is more logical to think that the most the British could hope for in February 1947 was an American assumption of necessary aid to Greece. This might mean a slightly greater involvement in European affairs, which in turn might lead eventually to the sort of partnership Bevin wanted, but it is difficult to see that it must necessarily lead to a complete and almost immediate change in American foreign policy.

Perhaps the British in late 1946 and early 1947 were convinced that this major change was imminent, based on American actions in Germany such as the cessation of reparations, Bi-Zonia, and the Stuttgart Speech, as well as

increased interest in Iran, Turkey, and Greece. This might mean that Bevin felt that a sudden abandonment of Greece would provide the issue on which the reversal of policy could be implemented. It might equally be the case that he saw no reason to interfere with a highly desirable development.

In view of the limited evidence available, there is no way of determining what was actually in Bevin's mind. Strong doubts must be expressed as to whether Bevin really considered all the implications of the decision to end all aid to Greece. This decision came during an extremely busy period, with the problems of Palestine and India, as well as the fuel crisis, taking up much of the time of all Cabinet ministers. It is far easier to assume that Bevin, in the midst of issues which seemed more important, with the knowledge that Attlee was not convinced of the strategic importance of Greece, and pressed incessantly by Dalton, gave in without much thought of long-term effects.

12. American Motivations

The American acceptance of responsibility for Greece is generally thought to have been based on a perception of the major threat arising from the Communist-led revolt which, if successful, would result in the creation of another satellite and increased Soviet influence in the Mediterranean. The British decision to withdraw is variously seen as the shock action which brought about a realisation of the seriousness of the situation, or an excuse to initiate a programme which had been planned long before.

A large proportion of authorities accept that the United States might have remained in semi-isolation for a long time, if not permanently, had it not been for the British announcement of its withdrawal from Greece. They believe that, whatever the reason for the British decision, it resulted in an unexpected change in American policy. Other authorities see it not as the cause of the change, but the justification for its implementation.

Many of the school of revisionist historians of the nineteen sixties and early seventies are positive that Truman, in early 1947, was searching for an issue on which to challenge the Republican Congress, an issue which would allow him to implement a long-held anti-Soviet policy, and, at the same time, expand the economy. In an extreme view:

> To obtain the economic and military resources tocarry out an active foreign policy, Truman had to convince the bulk of the people of the reality and magnitude of the Soviet threat. To do that he needed a dramatic issue.
> . . . . . .
> While Marshall prepared for Moscow, events in Greece rushed forward. Truman would soon have his opportunity to swing the Republicans around . . . . [On 20 February] the stage was set.[111]

Even a more moderate revisionist says: `The preconditions for action were present; the package simply awaited the proper moment for the opening and the unfolding of the policies. On February 21, 1947, ...'[112]

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[111]Stephen E. Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism* (London: Allen Lane, 1971), pp. 142, 145-146. Joyce Kolko and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972) pp. 329-358, set forth a most detailed argument to the effect that Truman was waiting for an issue on which to embark upon a new foreign policy.

[112]Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War* (New York, Wiley, 1967), p. 43.

Several other historians have taken the view that Truman had been waiting until the time was ripe to proclaim his doctrine.[113] These revisionist historians, in their efforts to prove that the United States was entirely responsible for the Cold War, refuse to consider that any other factors were involved. It is surprising to find that they do not suggest that Truman secretly incited the British to make the announcment of withdrawal. It would be an ironic joke if it turned out that Bevin had made a deliberate attempt to force Truman's hand when the President was waiting impatiently to find an excuse to take action.

A more reasonable view is that of Ernest R. May. He believes that Truman had come to the conclusion in the

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[113]Examples of such historians are Denna F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origin*, pp. 433-476; David Horowitz, *From Yalta to Vietnam* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp. 68-69; Richard J. Barnet, *Intervention and Revolution* (London: Paladin, 1970), p. 119; and, slightly less definitely, William A. Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Delta, 1962), pp. 268-270. Their evidence is usually a *New York Times* article by Arthur Krock, an elder statesman in the foreign policy field. Krock's article, ' "Must" Is the Key Word in New Foreign Policy,' 23 March 1947, and its use by these historians provides an excellent example of their treatment of evidence. Fleming accepts the story on the grounds that it must be true since Truman granted Krock an exclusive interview on another matter some years later. Barnet, apparently basing his account on Fleming, makes this into a statement that Krock's article resulted from an interview with Truman, which could hardly have occurred because of Truman's absence in Florida at the time. Something specific must have given Krock the idea. As late as 18 March, Krock wrote that the administration had refused to consider aid to countries threatened by Communism; by the 23rd, he said that Truman had had the plan for a long time; he reinforced this statment two days later (all articles in *New York Times*). Probably, Krock spoke sometime after 17 March to Admiral Leahy, the Presidential Chief of Staff, or Clark Clifford, Special Assistant to Truman. Both are known to have wanted a stronger policy. Robert J. Maddox, *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War* (Princeton University Press, 1974). pp. 58-59, discusses the revisionist view that Truman was waiting for an issue.

autumn of 1946 that large-scale aid should be given to Greece and Turkey at some time in the future, if the public could be induced through an educational campaign to accept the need. This would require some time to accomplish, during which the British were expected to continue her support, with some small supplemental aid from the United States. But, the analysis is based on a document which, while suggesting a programme to educate the American people in the realities of the situation in the eastern Mediterranean, says nothing about large-scale aid to Greece or Turkey.[114]

Gaddis makes a similar point of an American administration intention in early 1947 to educate the public `to the responsibilities of world leadership', in order to undertake a more active foreign policy.[115] In these views, the sudden announcement of the complete British withdrawal of aid made it necessary for Truman to initiate the programme on a crash basis.

While there is no substantial evidence for a plan to bring public opinion to a state in which a major change could be made, there is little doubt that Truman and the State Department were taking a stronger anti-Soviet view during 1946, as discussed in previous chapters. What is not clear is whether or not they had any real hope that a

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[114]*"Lessons" of the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 41-42, citing Henderson and Jernegan's memoranda of 21 October 1946, FRUS, 1946, VII, 893-897. These papers are on the subject of Turkey, and parallel the two State Department memoranda on Greece of the same date, *ibid.*, pp. 240-245, which have been discussed *supra*, p. 258..

[115]*The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971),p. 346.

situation might arise either through education or a particular incident which would enable them to initiate a new plan. Truman is supposed to have remarked to a close associate that:

> . . . he thought it fortunate that the British Government had placed the Greek situation "on our doorstep" for if they had not, our response to Communist expansion would have been "too little and too slow".[116]

The State Department records and the memoirs of Truman, Acheson and Jones concerning the effect of the British note fail to show any hesitation on the part of any one concerned to recommend that the needed aid for Greece be provided. While opposition to the proposal is discussed, there is no evidence of it being taken seriously. The problem created by the British announcement was that of how to obtain Congressional appropriation of the money required.

Acheson and Joseph Jones certainly give the impression that they recognised the need for a new and stronger policy, but saw little hope for its adoption. According to Jones, "Nothing appeared further removed from the realities of American political life at the opening of the year 1947 than that the United States would shortly assume the responsibilites of its power and embark on a vigorous, expensive, and sustained course of action."[117]

At the time, Truman attempted to play down the idea of a major change of policy. In an interview with newspaper editors shortly after the Truman Doctrine speech, he said,

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[116]Feis, *From Trust to Terror*, p. 192, relating a 1966 conversation with Clark Clifford, to whom Truman is quoted as having made the remark.

[117]*Present at the Creation*, pp. 190-216 and *passim*; *The Fifteen Weeks*, pp. 89-99.

`There has been a great deal of speculation as to the why and wherefore, and how it came about--to quote one newspaper I saw, "so suddenly". It didn't come about so suddenly . . . .' Truman then went on to trace the genesis of the Truman Doctrine back to his fierce argument with Molotov in April 1945, and created the impression that the general deterioration of Soviet-American relations since that time made it only a matter of course that he would embark on his anti-communist crusade. He implied that the British withdrawal from Greece was merely the occasion for its introduction.[116]

It would seem more likely that Truman, while fully aware of a deterioration in Soviet-American relations during 1946, had not yet prepared himself for an all-out anti-Soviet campaign. Except for the still-unresolved question of Germany, and perhaps the growing strength of the Communist parties of France and Italy, the Soviets were not posing major problems in late 1946 or early 1947. They were still uncooperative, but had made no active threats to East-West relations since they had backed down over Iran. They had been reasonably cooperative over the peace treaties for Italy and Eastern Europe. There was some hope that the German problem might be resolved in Moscow in another month.

Truman's strong statement to the newspaper editors came after the die of the doctrine had been cast, when he was engaged in a programme of self-justification. Now that he had initiated an all-out campaign of opposition to the Soviet Union, he was anxious to build up his image as an anti-communist from the beginning, and to protect himself

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[116]*Public Papers, Truman, 1947*, pp. 207-210 (17 April 1947).

from charges prevalent in Republican outbursts that he had failed to recognise the Soviet danger. To admit that he had suddenly come to the realisation of this danger only when the British had brought it to his attention, would reflect seriously on his knowledge and understanding of international problems for the past two years.

The problems of determining Truman's real attitude towards the Soviet Union in 1945 and 1946 is outside the scope of this work, but one point can be made. Most of the evidence indicating an intention prior to February 1947 to initiate a strong and consistent anti-Soviet campaign comes from Truman's *Memoirs*, published in 1955, and statements by his close associates written long after 1947, generally in the days in which the Cold War was at its most virulent point. Even works such as Acheson's and Bohlen's which appeared later[119] must be treated as the apologiae of Cold Warriors.

In actual fact, Truman seems to have regarded the period immediately following the delivery of the British note as one in which he had to make up his mind on an absolutely crucial matter. In his memoirs, he calls this a `momentous' decision, and reflects on the effort it required.[120] In a cabinet meeting on 7 March, Truman said he `was faced with a decision more serious than had ever confronted any President . . . .'[121] The day after the Truman Doctrine speech, he wrote to his daughter, `No one . . . knew how very tired and worn to a frazzle the Chief

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[119] *Present at the Creation*, 1969; and Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History*.

[120] *Memoirs*, II, 108.

[121] *Forrestal Diaries*, p. 247.

Executive had become. This terrible decision I had to make had been over my head for about six weeks.'[122]

The fact that Truman and his administration were taking a serious view of Soviet actions from February-March 1946 and beginning to take a strong attitude towards them does not mark any real decision. In Lord Bullock's words with regard to the Truman Doctrine, 'The fact that American policy for the past twelve months had been moving logically towards a decision about the United States' own expanded role as a world power did not make it easy for the Americans to take that decision when the moment came.'[123]

Lloyd Gardner, in analysing Truman's statement to the newspaper editors, brings out the confused manner in which the assumption of the British burden was presented to Congressional leaders on 27 February, and suggests that it casts strong doubts on Trumans's awareness of the real gravity of the situation before he was faced with the British notes. He draws attention to the idea that it was only after Acheson interrupted Marshall to deliver an apparently unscheduled tirade on the dangers of Soviet aggression that a firm policy for support of Greece was developed.[124]

While there is reason to question the accuracy of Jones' and Acheson's accounts of the 27 February meeting on which Gardner's view is based, the overall impression of

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[122]Letter printed in Margaret Truman, *Harry S. Truman* (New York: Pocket Books, 1974), p. 374. See also another portion of this letter, *ibid.*, p. 398.

[123]*Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary*, p. 370.

[124]*Architects of Illusion* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1978), pp. 206-218, based on an analysis of Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, pp. 138-142.

Jones' full study is one of confusion before delivery of the British note as to whether there should be a major change of direction in foreign policy. Charles P. Kindelberger, then a senior State Department official, although not directly involved in the Greek problem, recalled, `I had the very strong impression from a chance conversation . . . on February 20th (about), that the Department was in a panic as to what to do in Greece.[125]

At the end of 1946, there was a definite desire in administration circles to take a stronger attitude towards the Soviet Union, but little hope that such an action would be backed by Congress in terms of substantial appropriations or by American public opinion. It was fully recognised by the State Department that Greece was in danger of falling to communist-led rebels, and that American aid was needed, regardless of whether the British continued their support. While recommendations were made to Marshall just before the British note was delivered to the effect that Congress should be asked to approve a loan to Greece,[126] there is no indication that this would have amounted to more than a stop-gap measure, if indeed it could have been obtained.

Even after receipt of the British note, the only recommendation made by the State Department and approved by the President was that to try to obtain the specific amounts

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[125]FRUS, 1947, III, 242-243.

[126]Henderson's memorandum, FRUS, 1947, V, 29-31. This is dated 21 March and Acheson (*Present at the Creation*, p. 217) states that it was seen by Marshall on that date, and resulted in Marshall's instructions to implement before he left his office that day. Since Marshall does not seem to have visited the State Department that day (*supra*, p. 285), there is some error in Acheson's account.

needed to sustain Greece and Turkey. Nothing was decided in terms of initiating a new foreign policy. After the Congressional briefing where Acheson and Vandenberg apparently put the problem in terms of a communist threat, rhetoric and idealogy were relied on to win the support of Congress and public opinion. This in turn brought about the change in foreign policy. No doubt this pleased the State Department, and, probably, Truman.

It is not clear whether either saw the ~~idealogical~~ ideological approach as a means of bringing about this change. There is no evidence that the rhetorical language of the Truman Doctrine speech was intended to do more than convince a reluctant Congress to provide money for Greece and Turkey. Gaddis may well be correct in arguing that a rigid anti-Soviet policy was not Truman's objective, but the result of his use of the only weapon available to obtain the necessary appropriation. It may well have been only when he read the *New York Times* and other influential newspapers and periodicals that he realised that he had set America on a new course in international relations.

Whether Truman saw such a result as a desirable outcome of his method of applying pressure on Congress, or even acted deliberately to bring it about, is a question as difficult to answer as that of whether Bevin, in giving in to Dalton on the complete withdrawal of aid to Greece, saw that it might bring about a desirable result, or took the action deliberately. Probably, neither realised what the long-term consequences of their actions would be.

Chapter X

Conclusions

1. British Policy with Regard to Greece

British policy towards Greece during the wartime period was based on three factors: the value of the country as a centre of resistance to the Germans; the implied promise to restore the King and his Government; and the danger of the establishment of a pro-Soviet regime after liberation. In the early years, the military authorities placed great emphasis on the importance of sabotage and intelligence operations within Greece, believing these to outweigh the political factors the Foreign Office was stressing. By the autumn of 1943, with the decision of Quebec to engage in no major operations in the Balkans, it was evident that Greece would not become a battleground. At the same time, it appeared that EAM´s probable actions might require the use of major numbers of troops needed elsewhere, unless Greek political problems were solved to the extent that the Government could return peacefully. From then on, Wilson and Alexander, as well as the Chiefs of Staff, generally supported the efforts of the Foreign Office, often in opposition to the views of Churchill.

With the visit of the andarte delegation to Cairo, the Foreign Office accepted that the King´s return was the key

question in Greek politics and the major issue being used by EAM to attack the Government-in-Exile. The obvious course of action required that the King make a definite promise to absent himself from Greece pending a plebiscite and to appoint a regency to act in his absence. The first of many attempts to obtain the King's agreement to this plan was frustrated by Roosevelt, although Churchill and Eden have much to answer for.

Subsequent efforts to achieve this solution were also unsucccessful, to a large extent because of Churchill's reluctance to apply drastic pressure. As a result, the Greek Government entered Athens as an amorphous coalition including EAM, with the fundamental question of the King's future still unsolved. The fear that the King and a right-wing government were being introduced by the British against the wishes of the people led to the December civil war and the use of British forces to put it down. Only in the midst of the fighting was Churchill finally moved to force the issue with the King and obtain a firm promise to postpone his return and appoint the Regent. As a result, the civil war was ended and the coalition government, minus EAM, was able to establish itself and begin the task of reconstruction.

While British policy may be regarded as successful in that it re-established the Greek Government in Athens, it did so only at considerable cost in both Greek and British lives. If the civil war had been avoided, the dramatic increase in support for the King and the right wing would not have occured. The preponderance of the right after

January 1945 produced major problems which defied efforts of the British Government to solve. Churchill must bear a large share of the blame. His refusal to accept that the King had no substantial support in Greece, and his unwillingness to exert significant pressure on him, negated the efforts of the Foreign Office and the diplomats to achieve a *modus vivendi* which might have prevented the civil war. It was not the result of following a different, but logical policy, but a stubborn failure to face facts.

While Churchill should have recognised the unpopularity of the King, the ability and intention of EAM to undertake civil war was unclear. His confidence that the presence of British troops alone would prevent serious disorder was understandable, even though the Chiefs of Staff had warned him of their doubts. Perhaps no action on his part could have succeeded in obtaining the King´s consent until the civil war came, but he cannot be excused for failing to take more forceful action. Churchill´s inherent respect for the institution of monarchy, and his gratitude for George II´s loyalty to the British cause, undoubtedly made the task of urging an unpalatable decision on the King almost impossible.

Eden´s responsibility is more difficult to assess. He recommended courses of action which might have achieved the desired results. He supported the King´s position rather longer than did the Foreign Office or Leeper, and could be accused of faint-heartedness in obtaining approval for their plans. His knowledge of Churchill´s attitudes towards the

King may be responsible to a degree, but he must bear some of the blame.

Once the civil war was ended, the British had to decide on their relationship with the newly liberated nation. Churchill's initial policy of leaving the Greeks to find their own way had to be abandoned, in order to prevent right-wing excesses. Leeper, with the backing of the Foreign Office, and, after August 1945, with that of Bevin, used all possible pressures on the Regent and Greek political leaders for the formation of broadly based governments, rather than accept rightist administrations more representative of current feeling.

Bevin reluctantly gave in to demands by the Regent and the centre-left politicians to violate the provisions of the Varkiza agreement, by changing the order of the elections and plebiscite and by delaying each for lengthy periods, in the hope that moderate political elements would regain support. When the right won the election, the British still pressed for a coalition, but were forced to accept a rightist administration and permit the plebiscite to take place soon after. The victory of the King all but ended the effort to restrain the right, although Norton, with American support, was able to secure some diminuation of the extremist elements in the government in early 1947.

While these attempts to restore democracy were going on, the British were also trying to ensure that civil liberties were protected and the economy revived. Neither effort was successful. Right-wing repression, both from government agencies and partisan bands continued throughout

the period, and was a contributing factor to the resumption by EAM of the civil war in mid-1946. The British could do little to force observance of civil rights and justice except continual protests and assistance in the the training of police. Similarly, their contribution to attempts to put down the civil war were limited to financial support of the Greek Armed Forces, training, and advice.

The only weapon which could have been effective in solving the postwar problems of Greece was financial aid. The offer of aid tied to stringent conditions might have forced Greek Governments to adopt political policies which the British felt necessary, and made them carry out economic reforms and reconstruction. The one use of the financial weapon, the additional money and the currency commission resulting from McNeil's visit in October 1945, had no long term effect, because it was too insubstantial. Withdrawal of support of the armed forces would have only led to additional right and left wing violence, and, after the summer of 1946, to a probable victory of EAM. The British simply could not afford the massive increases of financial aid which were needed by the autumn of 1946. There were strong doubts as to whether they could continue their exisiting commitments.

By the autumn of 1946, Britain had completed much of the tasks for which it was responsible. The elections and the plebiscite had been carried out. A Greek Government had been installed which represented the wishes of the people, even if there were doubts as to its desirability. A Greek army had been created, equipped, and trained. Admittedly,

law and order had not been established completely, and a civil war was beginning, but the latter was being regarded as a minor `bandit uprising´ which could be put down with a little more money.

At the same time, there were strong doubts concerning the strategic importance to Britain of the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly in the the mind of the Prime Minister. While the lengthy examination by the Chiefs of Staff of the Greek problem resulted in a Cabinet decision that continued suppport was desirable, it was accompanied by a recommendation that the Americans should be asked to help. This was not a decision to abandon Greece, but an attempt to obtain some assistance.

It is logical to infer that the attitude of the Cabinet was: `We have carried out our responsibilities in Greece. There are doubts as to the strategic importance of Greece to Britain. We are in financial difficulties due mainly to carrying the major burden in the West of the war. Even so, we are willing to continue some support to Greece, but it is only fair that the United States share the cost.´ This cannot be considered a drastic conclusion.

The critical change was the refusal of Dalton to accept the instructions of the Cabinet. His insistence on the ending of all aid turned the message to Washington into a blackmail threat. Complete withdrawal without American acceptance of the burden would have meant the collapse of the Greek Government, although it is possible that Bevin and Dalton did not accept that this would be the effect. Bevin had been warned by his staff of the danger before he finally

gave in to Dalton, but he either discounted it or saw Dalton's approach as a better gambit.

In either case, there is no absolute certainty as to what his motive was. If he gave in to Dalton's insistence only because he knew he had little hope of an appeal back to the Cabinet, he was simply bowing to financial necessity. Even if, for the first time, he saw the merits of sudden and complete withdrawal of aid, he probably still capitulated because he accepted that no more money could be made available. While the circumstantial evidence for some sort of plot to bring the Americans back into international affairs is strong, there is no indication that Bevin had any such intention before he finally agreed with Dalton. Only a last minute realisation that Dalton's demand might have that effect is compatible with the idea of a deliberate plot. A request that the United States make a substantial contribution to the support of Greece would hardly force the Americans into a radical change of their foreign policy; a withdrawal of all aid which would cause a complete Greek collapse might.

The lack of any real evidence that this was in Bevin's mind, and his failure to play the ideological card of a communist threat to Greece or to emphasise the probability of a Greek collapse, makes such a hypothesis untenable. If Bevin, in later years, created the impression that this was his intention in February 1947, he, or his auditors, were confusing results with intentions. Bevin may very well have claimed, with full justification, that his actions had resulted in the Truman Doctrine and the return of the

Americans to Europe; he could only have been rationalising if he stated that he had intended this result in giving in to Dalton.

The British Government maintained the Government-in-Exile during the war, but were able to restore it to Greece at the liberation only by force of British arms. This failure was the result of many factors, such as the long-standing polarisation of Greek politics; the lack of a charismatic Greek leader; the overwhelming unpopularity and intransigence of George II; and the ability of the Greek Communist Party to establish itself as the major force within the occupied country. Had the British been able to solve the problem of the restoration of the King, and obtained at least token American support for the liberation, they might have re-established the Greek Government without major incident. Such a conclusion must be qualified; the strength of EAM was such that it might have undertaken the December 1944 civil war even if the issue of the King no longer existed.

The British put down the civil war and brought about a satisfactory arrangement concerning the King and a truce with the EAM, a set of accomplishments for which they have not received due credit. They were immediately faced with the responsibilities of supervising a new government and arranging free elections and the settlement of the question of the King by the plebiscite. They made major efforts to establish political stability and civil peace, and to help the devastated country to rebuild its economy. These efforts were generally frustrated, on the one hand by the

The Americans were far from helpful. Not only did they insist that Greece was an entirely British problem, but they believed that British policies were generally undesirable. Their views had some basis in their dislike of the institution of monarchy and suspicion of British imperialism, but there were more pragmatic reasons. The State Department felt that continued support of the King was contrary to the desires of the Greek people, and liable to lead to major difficulties at liberation. These views were made clear in the series of aides-memoire of 1943. The State Department took little note of the changes in British thinking after the `new plan´ of November 1943, probably because they realised that no definite action was being taken to force the King to submit to a plebiscite, or establish a regency. The only occasion on which the State Department raised its voice in 1944 was with regard to Churchill´s percentage agreements, which violated American policies opposing spheres of influence and war-time settlements.

If the State Department was unhelpful, Roosevelt created major difficulties. His intervention at Cairo not only prevented the implementation of British plans, but encouraged the King to continue his obstructionism for the next year. More difficult to judge, but probably more critical was Roosevelt´s refusal to permit the inclusion of even a token number of American combat troops in the liberation force, which might have made EAM have second thoughts concerning civil war. The final blow was Stettinius´s statement concerning British actions, a deliberate criticism made without any attempt to understand

the situation. A strong message condemming the revolt and supporting British efforts to contain it might have brought a truce before it went too far.

Lack of understanding of Greek affairs dominates the actions of Roosevelt, Hull, and Stettinius, although their only excuse is the pressure of other affairs. MacVeagh provided thorough reporting and logical interpretation and there were members of the State Department staff who were well informed. Kohler and Murray sometimes had a better appreciation of the situation and the probable outcome than did the British. But little attention was paid to the views of the State Department staff; for that matter, Roosevelt seldom consulted his Secretaries of State or bothered to inform them of his personal diplomacy.

The United States bears a considerable responsibility for the inability of the British to restore the Greek Government peacefully, partially for interference, but mainly for failure to help, when that help would not have been a major burden. Almost exclusively the fault is due to the tradition of isolationism. Not only did the United States have no specific interests in Greece, but it was thought to be to its advantage to remain aloof from foreign entanglements outside the Western Hemisphere. Military necessity might require her presence in parts of Europe, and even involvement in the political affairs of some European nations, but this must be limited to the absolute minimum and not include any long-term post-war commitments. Roosevelt's major objection to American participation in the

liberation of Greece was the fear that the United States would be involved in a lengthy occupation.

At Yalta the American attitude began to change. They were forced to accept some responsibility for the future of `Liberated Europe´ if there was to be any acceptable solution for Eastern Europe as a whole. The ensuing declaration meant that the United States was under a moral obligation to assist in re-establishing democracy in Greece as well as the rest of Europe. As a result, supervision of the elections and the plebiscite constituted the major American involvement in Greece in the first two post-war years. The United States did offer a limited amount of financial aid in the aftermath of the November 1945 economic crisis, attempting to use the credit as a means of encouraging economic reform. Occasionally MacVeagh used his personal influence to good effect to assist the British in their attempts to maintain political stability, but he usually acted on his own initiative.

Only after the American Chiefs of Staff recognised the strategic importance of Greece to the United States in the late summer of 1946 did Byrnes and the State Department adopted a more positive attitude. It was now accepted that Greece should be given some support, but there was no action taken to obtain the resources necessary to produce a significant effect. Indications of the new outlook gave the British hope of some aid in the future, although much depended on recommendations from the forthcoming Porter Mission. There is a strong probability that the Foreign

Office minute was accurate in terming Byrnes' new policy 'airy words'.

American policy towards Greece in the post-war years remained much the same as before. It was modified in only one significant way. Instead of objecting to or criticising British actions, the Americans began to appreciate the problems the British were facing, and to approve their policies. Their attitude was almost always one of cooperation, even if their assistance was limited. They still shied away from British attempts to involve them in joint committees and agencies. Until March 1947, their policy was to provide advice and encouragement, but to refuse any responsibility for the support of Greece.

While there was talk of a new policy within the State Department, and a flurry of enquiries concerning Greek needs, along with the organisation of the Porter Mission, the outlook was poor. The lack of interest in Greece and the return of isolationist feeling in the United States made any major change unlikely. It would require some major development to initiate a new policy, and there was litle chance that such a policy could be limited to Greece. Regradless of what British motivations were, the problem of Greece provided that development.

3. Anglo-American Relations

The wartime 'Special Relationship' between Britain and America did not exist as far as Greece was concerned. Churchill desired American support, particularly with regard

to the percentage arrangement with Stalin and at the time of liberation, although he tried to preclude their interference in political matters. Roosevelt at best kept his distance, determined to avoid involvement in Greek affairs, and frequently critical of British policies. The occasional Presidential messages to the King or the Greek Government were sometimes useful, but amounted to little in the way of support in the long run. His interference with the King in Cairo can be dismissed as a temporary aberration. There was no common ground between the two leaders and nothing which may be regarded as Anglo-American policy. Relations between the State Department and Halifax and between the Foreign Office and Winant reflected the attitudes of the heads of government. The State Department made its opposition to British policies abundantly clear.

At the working level, i.e., in Cairo, some form of 'Special Relationship' did exist. There was an extensive exchange of information and discussion between Leeeper and MacVeagh. They met almost daily and showed each other a large proportion of the messages which passed in and out of their Embassies. Each informed his counterpart of his own policies and those of his government (in MacVeagh's case, when he could determine what these were). Even in the difficult days of December 1944, when Leeper was more than irritated by what he considered MacVeagh's overemphasised attitude of neutrality, they still maintained close relations.

The post-war situation was little different. Attlee and Truman did not continue the Churchill-Roosevelt correspond-

ence, and are not known to have ever discussed Greece on a personal basis. Bevin and Byrnes were more closely associated than Eden and Hull, because the Council of Foreign Ministers and the United Nations brought them together so frequently, but there was no inclination to work closely with each other. MacVeagh and Leeper continued their relationship in Athens until Leeper's departure, and it would appear that MacVeagh and Norton operated on similar lines.

The American participation in the mission to observe Greek elections was not an effort to assist the British; nor was their minor financial aid to Athens in early 1946. They supported the British against Soviet complaints in the United Nations concerning troops in Greece, but the general attitude of the United States was to disassociate itself from the British presence there, at least until the late autumn of 1946. The overriding issue of winning the war which had forged the Churchill-Roosevelt partnership no longer existed. It was well into 1946 before a mutual perception of a Soviet threat to world peace gave a new basis for joint Anglo-American policies. Even this did little to establish a special bond between the two nations for the next year.

The Americans must take most of the responsibility; their insistence that they had no interests in Greece and their dislike of British policies made it impossible to develop a closer relationship. For much of the wartime period, this may not have worried the British; American participation in the supervision of Greek affairs might have

led to major problems, especially when it came to putting down mutinies or civil wars.

What Britain wanted from the United States during the war was military support and diplomatic backing for their policies, not interference. After the war, American involvement would have been welcome. Substantial aid or pressure from the United States would have lessened the British burden considerably, and improved the situation for the Greeks. Under such circumstances, Britain would have been able to withdraw far earlier and with more grace. By 1945, the only long term value of Greece to Britain was strategic, and this proposition was being questioned by Attlee. Had the Americans seen themselves as partners with Britain in the Eastern Mediterranean, and helped to rehabilitate the country politically and economically by mid-1946, there might have been no Greek problem.

4. A Summing Up

The operation of British and American policies towards Greece from 1943 onwards culminated in one critical action, the sudden British abandonment of responsibility for the future of that country, and the resultant acceptance by the Americans of the problems. Two British Governments tried to sustain Greece through the war and to restore it to peace and stability in the post-war years. Dwindling British resources at a time when the Greek economic situation was deteriorating and the country faced with what appeared to be a Soviet threat, made it impossible to continue with the

task. While Britain may be criticised for mistakes of judgement, particularly in the war-time years, the American policy of non-involvement prevented joint action both at the time of liberation and after the war which could have brought a satisfactory solution to the problems of Greece.

The failure of the policies of the two powers created a crisis situation in February 1947 when the American administration was forced either to permit the descent of Greece into anarchy or Communist control, or to take unprecedented action in the face of a hostile Congress and an ill-prepared public. The decision to support Greece required the preaching of an ideological crusade against the Soviet Union in the form of the Truman Doctrine, which in turn began the real Cold War.

The Cold War was not the result of defects in American and British policies towards Greece, but it was initiated because of the crisis situation which the failure of those policies brought about. If Bevin in early 1947 had not had to ask for American aid in such a form as to threaten the complete abandonment of Greece in six weeks time, the Cold War might have developed in different ways, or been avoided entirely.

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